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Paths to Victory

Lessons from Modern Insurgencies



Christopher Paul | Colin P. Clarke | Beth Grill | Molly Dunigan



NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Paths to Victory

Lessons from Modern Insurgencies

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Beth Grill | Molly Dunigan

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Preface

This research follows and expands a previous study that examined and compared the 30 insurgencies begun and completed worldwide between 1978 and 2008, published in 2010 as *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*.¹ This report supersedes that earlier publication in most respects. Like the original effort, the research documented here recounts the demonstrated effectiveness of a variety of counterinsurgency (COIN) concepts through case studies of insurgencies. However, the base of evidence has been expanded to 71 cases—all of the insurgencies completed worldwide between 1944 and 2010.

In addition to expanding the number and scope of the cases, the effort entailed broadening the accompanying analyses. All analyses conducted as part of the original effort are repeated, but several new ones have been added, including an analysis of the duration of insurgencies and of factors that are unique to cases involving support to the counterinsurgent force from an outside actor.

This report presents findings from all the analyses and explains the study's case selection and methods. It also presents an overview and in-depth assessments of the key concepts, practices, and factors that feature prominently in successful COIN operations. The 41 new case studies are summarized in the companion volume, *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (RR-291/2-OSD, available at

¹ Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-964-OSD, 2010b.

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR291z2.html). A companion volume to the original study, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*, includes detailed case histories for each of the original 30 COIN campaigns.² A spreadsheet with the full case data for all 71 cases is available for download at http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR291z1.html.

This work will be of interest to defense analysts and military planners who are responsible for evaluating current and future U.S. operations and COIN approaches; to academics and scholars who engage in historical research on COIN, insurgency, and irregular warfare; and to students of contemporary and historic international conflicts.

This research was sponsored by Office of the Secretary of Defense, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Irregular Warfare Division (OSD[CAPE]IW), and conducted within the International Security and Defense Policy Center of the RAND National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the defense agencies, and the defense Intelligence Community.

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² Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-964/1-OSD, 2010a.

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Summary

Insurgency has been the most prevalent form of armed conflict since at least 1949.¹ Despite that fact, following the Vietnam War and through the remainder of the Cold War, the U.S. military establishment turned its back on insurgency, refusing to consider operations against insurgents as anything other than a “lesser-included case” for forces structured for and prepared to fight two major theater wars. In the post-9/11 world, however, insurgency rocketed back into prominence. As counterterrorism expert William Rosenau notes, “insurgency and counterinsurgency . . . have enjoyed a level of military, academic, and journalistic notice unseen since the mid-1960s.”² Countering insurgents, or supporting the efforts of allies and partners as they did so, became the primary focus of U.S. operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. While debates continue to rage over how and even if the United States should be involved in future campaigns against insurgents, no one predicts that the future will be free of insurgencies.³ Indeed, at the time of this writing, insurgencies were ongoing in (at least) the following coun-

¹ See Thomas X. Hammes, “Why Study Small Wars?” *Small Wars Journal*, Vol. 1, April 2005b. In his 2013 book, Max Boot makes the argument that insurgency, guerrilla warfare, and unconventional conflict have been the most common forms of warfare dating back to the Romans and the Jews in AD 66. See Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present*, New York: Norton, 2013.

² William Rosenau, “Subversion and Terrorism: Understanding and Countering the Threat,” *The MIPT Terrorism Annual 2006*, Oklahoma City, Okla.: National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, 2006, p. 53.

³ See, for example, George Friedman, “The End of Counterinsurgency,” *RealClearWorld*, June 5, 2012.

tries: Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Israel/Palestine, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Uganda, and Yemen. Countering insurgencies is now a major concern for regional governments, global coalitions, and international security policymakers alike.⁴

When a country is threatened by an insurgency, what strategies and approaches give the government the best chance of prevailing? Contemporary discourse on the subject is voluminous and often contentious. A variety of different concepts and areas of emphasis are advocated, but such advocacy is usually based on relatively limited evidence. Advice for the counterinsurgent tends to be based on little more than common sense, a general understanding of history, or a handful of detailed historical cases, instead of a solid and systematically collected body of historical evidence. A 2010 RAND report, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, sought to improve this situation with thorough analyses based on a firm foundation of historical data, along with extensive and detailed comparative analyses of the 30 insurgencies begun and completed worldwide between 1978 and 2008.⁵ This report expands on and supersedes that previous effort, adding 41 new cases and comparing all 71 insurgencies begun and completed worldwide between World War II and 2010. The current study also asked some additional questions, including questions about the approaches that led counterinsurgency (COIN) forces to prevail when supported or provided by another nation (an external actor) and questions about timing and duration, such as which factors are associated with the duration of insurgencies and which are associated with the length of postconflict peace intervals (the durability of insurgency outcomes), as well as how long historical COIN forces had to be engaged in effective COIN practices before they won.

⁴ See Richard H. Shultz, Douglas Farah, and Itamara V. Lochard, *Armed Groups: A Tier One Security Priority*, United States Air Force Academy, Colo.: Institute for National Security Studies, Occasional Paper 57, September 2004.

⁵ Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-964-OSD, 2010b.

Case Selection and Analytic Approach

This research quantitatively tested the performance of 24 COIN concepts against the historical record. These concepts were identified through a survey of the existing literature and based on previous research in this area. Some of the concepts were drawn from classical perspectives on COIN from the previous century, such as pacification and resettlement; others are contemporary concepts suggested for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, such as “boots on the ground” and the concept implicit in U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*.⁶

Findings and analyses are based on detailed case studies compiled for 71 insurgencies. Each case is supported by a detailed case narrative and by quantitative data on nearly 300 individual factors. These analyses benefited considerably from both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as from the ability to move back and forth between the two. The qualitative narratives frequently suggested new factors or hypotheses, which were then tested comparatively across cases using the quantitative data. Patterns that did not make sense in the quantitative analyses were explored in the detailed narratives, with the nuance from the narratives subjected to quantitative analyses in the form of still more new hypotheses or new factors.

The selected cases are the 71 most recent resolved insurgencies, spanning the period from World War II through 2010.⁷ In addition to being perfectly representative of the modern history of insurgency, these cases represent geographic variation (mountains, jungles, deserts, cities), regional and cultural variation (Africa, Latin America, Central Asia, the Balkans, the Far East), and variation in the military capabilities and tactics of COIN forces and insurgent forces alike. The 71 cases do contain a subset of cases that are unlike the others, however, and are

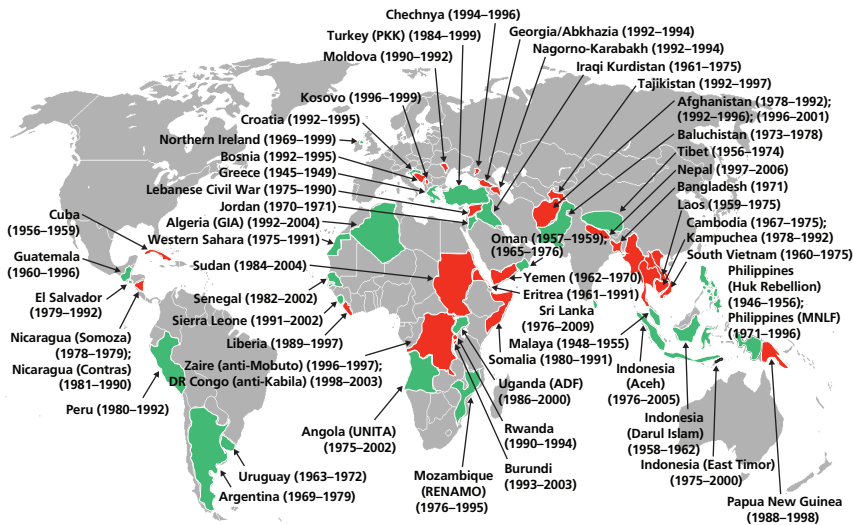
⁶ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2007. For a review of classic approaches to COIN, see Austin Long, *On “Other War”: Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-482-OSD, 2006.

⁷ Only resolved cases were included because cases in which the outcome had yet to be determined would not have been useful for identifying the correlates of COIN success.

therefore not appropriate comparisons for the larger set of cases. Specifically, their outcomes were not driven primarily by the effectiveness of the COIN force but by exogenous factors related to broader historical currents: the end of colonialism and the end of apartheid. We removed the cases that fought “against the tide of history” (and one more case with an indeterminate outcome) from the cases used for the quantitative analyses, leaving an analytic core of 59 cases. (See Figure S.1; for a more detailed discussion, see Chapter Three.) We retain all 71 case narratives both for comprehensiveness and because the nuance and rich detail make each case potentially instructive, even if it is not broadly comparable with other cases.

The data include several subsets of interest. First, we divided the 59 core cases into 44 “iron fist” cases, in which the primary emphasis of the COIN force was preponderantly (and often almost exclusively) on eliminating the insurgent threat, and 15 motive-focused cases,

Figure S.1
Map of the 59 Core Cases



NOTE: Green shading indicates that the COIN force prevailed (or had the better of a mixed outcome), while red shading indicates that the outcome favored the insurgents (thus, a COIN loss).

with primary or at least balanced attention to addressing the motives for beginning and sustaining the insurgency. Second, we isolated the 28 cases in which a major power contributed forces to the counterinsurgent side, further dividing the set into the 13 cases in which such force contributions were limited to advisers, special operations forces, or air power and the 15 cases in which significant external ground forces were present.

Key Findings

Because this research was vast in scope, the results are rich, detailed, and sometimes complicated. Different readers may find different aspects of our findings to be particularly interesting or illuminating; this section presents findings that we have identified as particularly important to formulating and supporting successful COIN operations.

Seventeen of 24 COIN Concepts Tested Receive Strong Support; One (“Crush Them”) Has Strong Evidence Against It

Table S.1 lists the 24 concepts tested in Chapter Four of this report. Each concept was represented by a set of specific factors in the data and was evaluated based on the strength of the relationship of those factors with case outcomes, both in terms of correlation and in cross-tabulation. We considered concepts to have strong support if the relationship between the implementation of the concept (as represented by the factors) and the case outcome was very strong (i.e., implementation of the concept is a very strong indicator of outcome). We considered concepts to have minimal support if there was limited correlation between the implementation of the concept and the outcome. Finally, we considered there to be strong evidence *against* a concept if it was implemented in a greater proportion of losses than wins.

Seventeen of the 24 concepts had strong empirical support.⁸ There was strong evidence against one concept: “Crush them.” We found

⁸ The astute reader will note that 18 rows in Table S.1 are listed as receiving strong support; this is because a single concept, legitimacy, has been subdivided into two rows—one for government legitimacy and one for legitimacy of the use of force.

Table S.1
Degree of Support for 24 COIN Concepts

Concept	Degree of Evidentiary Support
Development	Strong support
Pacification	Strong support
Legitimacy (government)	Strong support
Legitimacy (use of force)	Strong support
Reform	Strong support
Redress	Minimal support
Democracy	Minimal support
Unity of effort	Strong support
Resettlement	Minimal support
Cost-benefit	Strong support
Border control	Strong support
Initiative	Strong support
“Crush them”	Strong evidence against
Amnesty/rewards	Minimal support
Strategic communication	Strong support
Field Manual 3-24 (<i>Counterinsurgency</i>)	Strong support
Clear, hold, and build	Strong support
“Beat cop”	Strong support
“Boots on the ground”	Strong support
“Put a local face on it”	Minimal support
Cultural awareness	Minimal support
Commitment and motivation	Strong support
Tangible support reduction	Strong support
Criticality of intelligence	Strong support
Flexibility and adaptability	Strong support

that this concept was applied where the COIN force employed both escalating repression and collective punishment. Of 33 COIN forces implementing “crush them,” 23 lost to the insurgents.

In the discussion of the next key finding, we single out three of the strongly supported concepts for more detailed attention because they were identified as priority concepts that were always implemented by victorious COIN forces.

Effective COIN Practices Run in Packs, and Some Practices Are Always in the Pack: Tangible Support Reduction, Commitment and Motivation, and Flexibility and Adaptability

One of the key findings reported in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency* was that “effective COIN practices tend to run in packs,” meaning that COIN forces that defeated insurgencies implemented numerous effective practices rather than just a few.⁹ This study confirmed that finding, but the wide range of cases considered here allowed us to further explore its nuances. Qualitative comparative analysis techniques identified three priority COIN concepts. These three concepts were implemented in each and every COIN win, and no losing COIN force implemented all three:

- tangible support reduction
- commitment and motivation
- flexibility and adaptability.

Implementation of all three of these concepts appears to be prerequisite for COIN success, based on the core historical data underlying this study.

Tangible support refers to the ability of the insurgents to maintain needed levels of recruits, weapons and materiel, funding, intelligence, and sanctuary. In every COIN win, COIN forces managed to substantially reduce tangible support to the insurgents; only two COIN forces managed to substantially reduce insurgent tangible support and still lost.

⁹ Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xv.

Tangible support is not the same as popular support. Although tangible support can come from a supporting population, it can also come from an external supporter—either a state sponsor or a diaspora or other nonstate sponsor. This report echoes the finding from *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* that “tangible support trumps popular support.”¹⁰ In many cases, tangible support came from the population, and the level of popular support corresponded with levels of tangible support. When they did not match, however, victory followed tangible support. All three cases in which the government had the support of the majority of the population but the insurgents’ tangible support was not significantly interrupted were COIN losses. Meanwhile, the COIN force won 12 of 14 cases in which the COIN force reduced flows of tangible support to the insurgents but the insurgents retained their popular support.

Commitment and motivation refers to the extent to which the government and COIN forces demonstrated that they were actually committed to defeating the insurgency, rather than maximizing their own personal wealth and power, bilking external supporters by extending the conflict, or avoiding (or fleeing) combat. In all COIN wins, both the government and the COIN force demonstrated their commitment and motivation, whereas the insurgents won all 17 of the cases in which commitment and motivation were assessed as lacking.¹¹ Note that this set of factors considered the commitment and motivation of both the threatened government and the COIN forces, not just one or the other.

Flexibility and adaptability captures the ability of COIN forces to adjust to changes in insurgent strategy or tactics. While some COIN forces failed to adapt in (and lost) early or intermediate phases in cases that they still managed to win, all successful COIN forces made any necessary adaptations in the decisive phase of each case.

¹⁰ Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xxii.

¹¹ Before dismissing this result as trivial or obvious, note that there are several cases in the data in which an external actor contributed well-motivated and professional COIN forces in support of a government fighting an insurgency, but the government and indigenous COIN forces failed to demonstrate their resolve. All of these cases were ultimately COIN losses.

Every Insurgency Is Unique, but Not So Much That It Matters at This Level of Analysis; the COIN Scorecard Discriminates Cases into Wins and Losses

A regular theme in discussions about insurgency is that “every insurgency is unique.” The distinct narratives for the 71 cases examined here lead the authors to concur, except that those distinct or unique characteristics do not matter at this level of analysis. All the findings of this study hold across the core cases without an exception for unique narratives or cases.¹² This holds for the prioritized concepts, and it holds for the COIN scorecard. A simple scorecard of 15 good practices and 11 bad practices perfectly discriminates the 59 core cases into wins and losses. Table S.2 lists 15 “good” COIN practices or factors and 11 “bad” COIN practices or factors.

Subtracting the total number of bad practices in the decisive phase of each case from the total number of good practices produces a scorecard score. If the score is negative (more bad practices than good), then the case was a COIN loss; if the score is positive (more good practices than bad), the case was a COIN win. This holds without exception. Table S.3 highlights this result. The first column lists the scorecard scores, from –11 (no good practices and all the bad practices) to 15 (all the good practices and none of the bad). The second column lists the number of cases receiving each score that were COIN losses, and the third column lists the number of these cases that were COIN wins. The fact that there is no overlap between the second and third columns reinforces how effectively the scorecard discriminates historical wins from losses.

¹² The distinctive features and characteristics of individual insurgencies most certainly *do* matter in actual efforts to implement approaches and practices on the ground. Our findings do not suggest a “one-size-fits-all” approach to COIN at the execution level; rather, these findings suggest that there is a finite set of good practices that a COIN force should always aspire to realize, but how a COIN force actually does so in any given operation will vary depending on the context.

Table S.2
“Good” and “Bad” COIN Practices

15 Good COIN Practices	11 Bad COIN Practices
The COIN force realized at least two strategic communication factors.	The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression.
The COIN force reduced at least three tangible support factors.	There was corrupt and arbitrary personalistic government rule.
The government realized at least one government legitimacy factor.	Host-nation elites had perverse incentives to continue the conflict.
Government corruption was reduced/good governance increased since the onset of the conflict.	An external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of the insurgents.
The COIN force realized at least one intelligence factor.	The host nation was economically dependent on external supporters.
The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas.	Fighting was initiated primarily by the insurgents.
Unity of effort/unity of command was maintained.	The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.
The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate application of force.	The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents.
The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.	The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force.	The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustainment.
The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force.	The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment.
The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas.	
Government/COIN reconstruction/development sought/achieved improvements that were substantially above the historical baseline.	
The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control.	
The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.	

Table S.3
Balance of Good COIN Practices and Bad
COIN Practices for the 59 Core Cases

Score	COIN Losses	COIN Wins
-11	1	0
-9	2	0
-8	2	0
-7	4	0
-6	3	0
-5	2	0
-4	4	0
-3	5	0
-2	4	0
-1	4	0
2	0	2
3	0	3
4	0	2
5	0	3
6	0	3
7	0	1
8	0	1
9	0	1
10	0	4
11	0	2
12	0	2
13	0	3
15	0	1

Quality Is More Important Than Quantity, Especially Where Paramilitaries and Irregular Forces Are Concerned

Of perennial interest to scholars of insurgency are the force requirements for effective COIN. The granularity of data in these cases does not allow for conclusions regarding force ratios between COIN forces and insurgents, nor does it allow us to identify specific COIN force composition ratios of regular forces, police, special operations forces, or paramilitaries. These analyses do support some higher-level observations that should be of interest nonetheless.

First, in no case did the COIN force win unless it overmatched the insurgents and could force them to fight as guerrillas by the decisive phase of the conflict. Governments that attempted to transition their COIN forces to overmatch the insurgents usually sought to increase both the quality and the quantity of their COIN forces. While quantity may have a quality all its own, COIN force quality appears to have been more important than quantity in every case in which it mattered among the historical cases examined here.

Second, most COIN forces used significant numbers of police, paramilitary troops, or militia personnel, with virtually no correlation with outcome. This was because, too often, these forces were inadequately armed or trained or otherwise ineffective. However, in the 23 cases in which police or paramilitaries were *not* ineffective, COIN forces won 69 percent of the time. This is another historical endorsement of the importance of quality of COIN forces and, further, an endorsement of the inclusion of such forces, if they can be adequately prepared.¹³

Governments Supported by External Actors Win the Same Way Others Do

We repeated all the analyses for the subset of cases that involved forces from an external major power in support of the government (28 cases). The findings show that external or externally supported COIN forces

¹³ For more on the historical role of local defense forces, see Austin Long, Stephanie Pezard, Bryce Loidolt, and Todd C. Helmus, *Locals Rule: Historical Lessons for Creating Local Defense Forces for Afghanistan and Beyond*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-1232-CFSOCC-A, 2012.

win almost as often as wholly indigenous COIN forces. This suggests that using external forces is not inherently a bad COIN practice. Further, results for cases involving COIN support by external actors match results from the core data; the same concepts whose implementation was correlated with COIN success in the broader data were also correlated with success in the external actor cases.

The external actor analysis raised two cautions. First, as noted previously, commitment and motivation of the government and COIN force are critical to COIN success. This holds in external actor cases as well. No external COIN force or externally supported COIN force was able to prevail if the host-nation government was insufficiently committed. The caution, then, is for would-be external supporters: *You can't want it more than they do!*

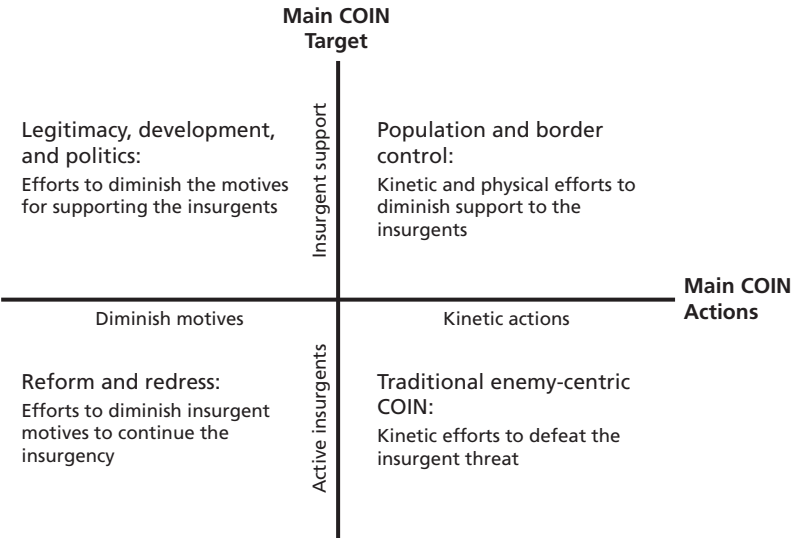
Second, every case that involved external professional forces supporting the insurgents was a COIN loss, unless it was balanced by external professional forces supporting the government. This caution applies to those who advocate a “light footprint” in supporting COIN forces or support restricted to advisers, special operations forces, and air power. History suggests that if insurgents have external conventional forces on their side, the COIN force needs such support, too.

The Iron Fist COIN Path, Focused Primarily on Eliminating the Insurgent Threat, Is Historically Less Successful

The historical cases primarily followed one of two paths: The “iron fist” path, with a focus preponderantly (and often almost exclusively) on eliminating the insurgent threat, or the motive-focused path, with primary or at least balanced attention to addressing the motives for beginning and sustaining the insurgency. Figure S.2 shows these two new conceptual divisions and how they relate to one another.

While both paths can lead to success, historically, COIN forces following the iron fist path won only 32 percent of the time, while those on the motive-focused or mixed path won 73 percent of the time. Not only have iron fist COIN efforts failed more often than they have succeeded, but they have almost always involved atrocities or other COIN force behaviors that are considered “beyond the pale” by contemporary American ethical standards.

Figure S.2
New COIN Dichotomies: Insurgent Support Versus Active Insurgents, and Efforts to Diminish Motive Versus Kinetic Efforts



RAND RR291/I1-S.2

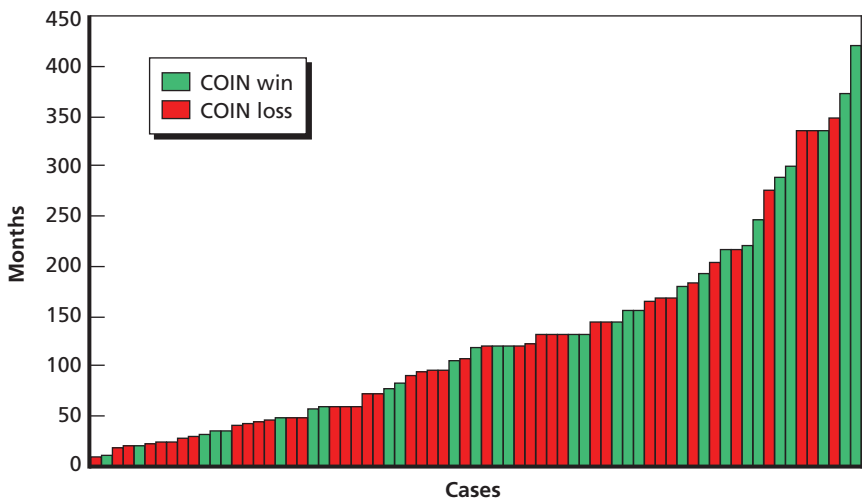
While this finding appears particularly relevant to ongoing debates between advocates of population-centric and enemy-centric COIN, this report argues that different categories provide better context for these results and provide a more nuanced understanding of COIN going forward. Iron fist COIN forces struggle because of their focus on the insurgents at the expense of a focus on *support* for those insurgents, as well as their focus on kinetic action (fighting, killing, capturing) to eliminate the insurgents at the expense of efforts to diminish the *motives* for the insurgency (and for supporting the insurgents). Successful COIN forces find a balance on the spectrums of focal targets (insurgent support or the insurgents themselves) and focal actions (efforts to kinetically eliminate insurgents/support versus efforts to diminish the motives for insurgency/support). COIN forces on the motive-focused path succeeded not just because their main emphases included motive-diminishing actions, but because they also fought the insurgents and because they targeted both insurgents and their main sources of support. The (relatively small) number of iron fist path win-

ners prevailed with a primary emphasis on smashing the insurgents but also found ways to diminish their support.

COIN Takes Time, but Some COIN Practices Help End Insurgencies Sooner and Lead to a More Durable Postconflict Peace

The durations of insurgencies vary widely. The median length of the 71 cases was 118 months (slightly less than ten years).¹⁴ Beating an insurgency takes longer than succumbing to one, on average: The median length of a COIN win was 132 months (11 years), while the median COIN loss was only 95 months (slightly less than eight years).¹⁵ Figure S.3 shows the duration in months of all 71 cases.¹⁶

Figure S.3
Durations of 71 Insurgencies



RAND RR291/1-S.3

¹⁴ The mean duration is 128.4 months, pulled higher than the median by the few extremely long cases. The standard deviation for that mean is 99.3 months, due to the extreme variation in case durations, ranging from three months to 420 months (35 years).

¹⁵ The mean duration of a COIN win was 152.2 months, with a standard deviation of 109.9 months; the mean duration of a COIN loss was 112 months, with a standard deviation of 89 months.

¹⁶ Note that these 71 cases include completed insurgencies only. If one considers insurgencies that are ongoing, a small number of very long cases would increase the average duration.

Chapter Five presents analyses aimed at identifying factors and concepts whose presence was correlated with shortening COIN wins and prolonging the peace interval after a COIN win. The following concepts, in addition to being endorsed as associated with COIN success, all significantly decrease the remaining duration of a conflict when they have been implemented:

- tangible support reduction
- border control
- strategic communication
- beat cop.

These additional factors are also significantly associated with decreased duration:

- The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas (COIN force overmatch).
- COIN or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by insurgents.
- There were significant government reforms over the course of the conflict.

The analysis of postconflict peace intervals was much more limited, but it identified two factors significantly related to the stability of a COIN win and extending the length of the postconflict peace interval:

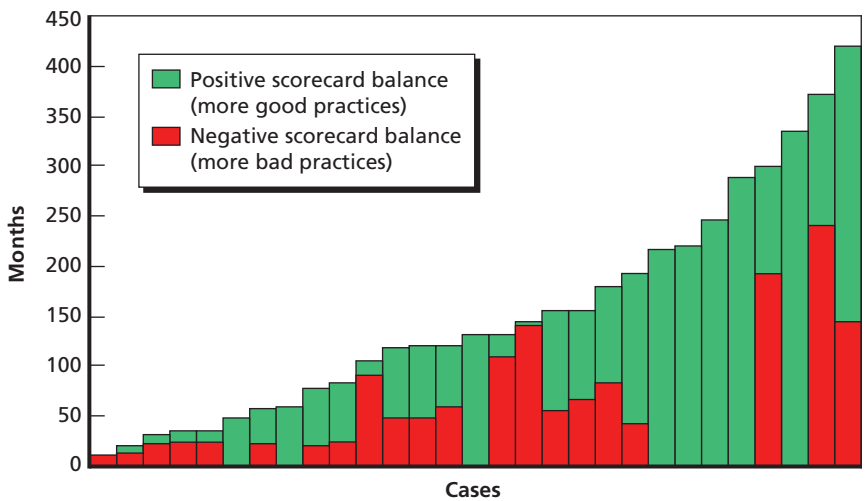
- There were significant government reforms over the course of the conflict.
- There were significant ethical, professional, or human rights–related military reforms over the course of the conflict.

Note that government and military reform is a supported COIN concept (see Table S.1), and it contributes to reducing conflict length and increasing postconflict peace intervals.

COIN Takes Time: After Good COIN Practices Are in Place, the Average Insurgency Lasts Roughly Six More Years

Because the COIN scorecard presented in Table S.2 discriminates historical wins and losses so effectively, it begs a further question: Once a COIN force manages to achieve a positive balance of good and poor COIN practices, how long does it have to sustain those practices to win? The answer: about six years, on average. Figure S.4 shows the duration, in months, of the cases in our study in which the COIN force ultimately prevailed. The figure also shows the amount of time the COIN force in each case spent with a scorecard balance below 2 (shown in red) and at least 2 (shown in green). All COIN winners had a scorecard score of at least 2 by the end of the conflict. The median remaining duration of an insurgency after the COIN force achieved a positive scorecard score was 69 months, so, on average, forces that establish effective COIN practices prevail in 69 months. Note

Figure S.4
Durations of Winning Cases and Time with Good and Bad COIN Scorecard Scores



that there is considerable variation around that average, but it suggests a planning point nonetheless.¹⁷

Poor Beginnings Do Not Necessarily Lead to Poor Ends

One of the key findings from *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* was that “poor beginnings do not necessarily lead to poor ends.” In short, this means that COIN forces that get off on the wrong foot can adapt over the course of an insurgency.¹⁸ This finding holds over the more comprehensive set of cases studied here. We divided each of the 71 cases into between one and five phases, for a total of 204 rows of data. We then scored each phase according to whether the COIN force or the insurgents had the upper hand at its end. Because each case had a single decisive phase, 204 total phases minus 71 total cases (and, thus, final phases) leaves 133 initial or intermediate phases. In more than half of the *intermediate* phases (32 of 58) en route to COIN wins at the case level, the insurgents held the upper hand. Only nine of 29 COIN winners at the case level “ran the table” and had the upper hand in every phase of the conflict. All of the others had at least one phase in which the insurgents got the better of the COIN force but the latter managed to win in the end.

Recommendations

Taken together, these key findings suggest the following recommendations:

Recommendations for Defeating Insurgencies

- Focus first on overmatching the insurgents, defeating their conventional military aspirations, and forcing them to fight as guerrillas.

¹⁷ The variation in the amount of time spent with a positive scorecard score prior to the end of the conflict can be quantified: The median was 69 months, and the mean was 101 months, with a standard deviation of 95 months.

¹⁸ Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xxiii.

- Identify insurgents' sources of tangible support and seek to reduce them.
- Recognize that essential tangible support may or may not flow from the population.
- Be prepared to continue good COIN practices for six or more years after a substantial balance of good COIN practices is first achieved.
- Avoid the exclusively "iron fist" COIN path.
- Generate or retain capabilities to plan and pursue multiple mutually supporting lines of operation.

Recommendations for Helping Others Fight an Insurgency

- When building host-nation security forces to fight an insurgency, balance quality and quantity, but favor quality.
- Help host-nation governments reform—to improve their commitment and motivation and to increase legitimacy.
- Retain leverage over supported governments and elites to encourage sufficient commitment and motivation; avoid creating perverse incentives or dependencies.

Recommendations for COIN Doctrine and Theory

- Move away from strategic discussions that focus on a population-centric versus insurgent-centric dichotomy, and add nuance by specifying spectrums for targets (insurgent support versus insurgents) and actions (diminishing motives versus kinetic diminution) with the goal of achieving balance.
- Revise COIN doctrine to reinforce core principles and include key insights from this research.

Acknowledgments

David Lowe, our principal point of contact in the Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD[CAPE]), provided critical support for and oversight of this effort. We owe Timothy Bright, also at OSD(CAPE), a debt of gratitude for his willingness to support foundational research with limited immediate application to the day-to-day challenges his office faces but of value elsewhere in the U.S. Department of Defense and of great possible future utility. We hope the host of interesting findings herein rewards their support.

We continue to be indebted to those whose thoughts, comments, and input supported the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* research that this effort builds upon: Andrew Caldwell, formerly of OSD(CAPE); Matthew Minatelli in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; Charles Ragin, Chancellor's Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Irvine; and several RAND colleagues, including Jefferson Marquis, and Daniel Byman. We further acknowledge the contribution made by the host of participants in briefings and discussions of the previous work in the Pentagon, with Army G-2, OSD(CAPE), and Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy personnel; the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School at Hurlburt Field, Florida; the Center for Army Analysis at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia; the National Defense University Center for Complex Operations in Washington, D.C.; the U.S. Army/U.S. Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Center at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas; the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California; and various other venues, institutions, and conferences.

Our thanks go to RAND colleague Martin Libicki for the list of insurgencies from which we selected and developed our case studies. We further thank John Nagl and John Gordon, who served as quality assurance reviewers and helped us tighten the analyses and presentation of this study's companion reports. We also wish to acknowledge the contributions of RAND administrative assistant Maria Falvo, without whom the citations herein would be less accurate and complete. Finally, we thank the RAND editorial and production team, Matt Byrd, Lauren Skrabala, and Sandy Petitjean, who saw the draft reports through to their final form.

Omissions and errors remain the responsibility of the authors alone.

Abbreviations

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ANC	African National Congress
COIN	counterinsurgency
DDR	disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSE	Dimokratikos Stratos Elladas [Democratic Army of Greece]
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EOKA	Ethniki Organosis Kiprion Agoniston [National Organization of Cypriot Struggle]
FDD	Forces for the Defense of Democracy
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale [National Liberation Front]
FM	field manual
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional [Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front]

FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique [Mozambique Liberation Front]
FRETILIN	Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente [Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor]
fsQCA	Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (software)
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka [Free Aceh Movement]
GIA	Groupe Islamique Armé [Armed Islamic Group]
HV	Hrvatska Vojska [Croatian army]
IED	improvised explosive device
IO	information operations
JNA	Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija [Yugoslav People's Army]
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MFDC	Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance [Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance]
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola [People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola]
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	nongovernmental organization

OSD(CAPE)IW	Office of the Secretary of Defense, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Irregular Warfare Division
PAIGC	Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde [African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde]
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
PKK	Parti Karkerani Kurdistan [Kurdistan Workers' Party]
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PSYOP	psychological operations
QCA	qualitative comparative analysis
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana [Mozambican National Resistance]
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SNM	Somali National Movement
SOF	special operations forces
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola [National Union for the Total Independence of Angola]
UTO	United Tajik Opposition

WWII	World War II
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People’s Union

Introduction

Purpose of This Study

Insurgency is a timeless mode of conflict and has taken many forms, including independence movements during decolonization, ethnic and sectarian conflict, regional separatism, and resistance to occupation. The United States has spent more than a decade opposing—and supporting indigenous operations in opposing—insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. In short, insurgency has been the most prevalent form of armed conflict since at least 1949, and it is not going away.¹ *When a country is threatened by an insurgency, which counterinsurgency (COIN) approaches give the government the best chance of prevailing?* This is the principal line of inquiry addressed in this report.

Contemporary discourse is rife with recommended concepts for COIN and advice for would-be counterinsurgents. Scholars, observers, and theorists—amateur and professional alike—draw on history, common sense, or contemporary operations to recommend certain COIN practices and disparage others. Communities of interested military and nonmilitary personnel engage in vigorous debates about the effectiveness of various concepts for COIN, or the applicability of a certain proponent's proposals in specific contexts.² Much of the discussion and theorizing is founded on individuals' personal experiences with insurgency, their detailed analysis of one or two historical

¹ Thomas X. Hammes, "Why Study Small Wars?" *Small Wars Journal*, Vol. 1, April 2005.

² See, for example, the wide range of articles, opinions, and (most of all) discussions that have taken place on the *Small Wars Journal* blog.

cases, or their general sense of history. While existing concepts and discussions clearly contain good advice for COIN forces, substantial disagreement and dispute remain. How are we to adjudicate among partially conflicting concepts and contradictory advice? We want to absorb the lessons of history, but of which lessons and which histories should we be most mindful?

A 2010 RAND report, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, sought to answer these questions through detailed case studies of the 30 insurgencies begun and completed worldwide between 1978 and 2008. This report largely supersedes that previous study, incorporating its 30 original cases into a broader and more comprehensive database, with expanded research and analysis.³ The original core question remains, however: Which COIN approaches are most effective? This report also poses several new research questions, including the following:

- Once good COIN practices are in place, how long must a COIN force sustain them before the conflict is resolved?
- What factors can help reduce the duration of an insurgency? What factors tend to extend insurgencies?
- What factors contribute to a more durable postconflict peace?
- Do good COIN practices differ for external COIN forces (that is, COIN forces from another country)? If so, which COIN practices are most effective for these external forces?

Defining COIN and the Implications of the Term

In this report, we define *counterinsurgency* (COIN) as efforts undertaken by a government and its security forces (or the security forces of supporting partners or allies) to oppose an insurgency. However, unlike so many other definitions, the precise wording does not really matter. For us, counterinsurgency is whatever one does when oppos-

³ The findings of the original study are fairly robust in light of the expanded data set. The core findings of *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* are explicitly revisited in light of the new data in Appendix D.

ing an insurgency. The term *counterinsurgency* does not and should not presuppose an approach to or theory of counterinsurgency, simply that there is an insurgency and there is someone who wishes to fight it. We offer this brief definitional note only because the literature on this topic often actively conflates the type of operation (countering an insurgency) with a specific concept for or theory of counterinsurgency (usually population-centric counterinsurgency, or the concept outlined in Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*) by using the same term to denote both.⁴

This conflation leads to ambiguity and confusion, especially when the literature condemns COIN in general when it is merely disagreeing with the approach the United States has taken in fighting the Afghan insurgency,⁵ and when it is making a statement that the United States should not get involved in operations to oppose insurgencies, whatever concepts are employed.⁶

Here, we use *counterinsurgency* to refer exclusively to operations against insurgents, not a specific theory, approach, concept, strategy, or set of tactics for doing so. Further, we urge others to do the same: When describing a specific concept for counterinsurgency (even the one from the field manual helpfully titled *Counterinsurgency*), use additional specifying language (as we have done in the preceding paragraphs in this section).⁷ Regarding the debates over COIN concepts

⁴ See, for example, Christopher A. Preble, "Playing to Our Strengths—and Why COIN Doesn't," *The National Interest*, January 19, 2012; Oleg Svet, "COIN's Failure in Afghanistan," *The National Interest*, August 31, 2012; Ryan Evans, "COIN Is Dead, Long Live the COIN," *Foreign Policy*, December 16, 2011; and David H. Ucko, "Counterinsurgency After Afghanistan: A Concept in Crisis," *Prism*, Vol. 3, No. 1, December 2011.

⁵ Svet, 2012.

⁶ Jeffrey Record, *The American Way of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency*, Washington, D.C.: CATO Institute, Policy Analysis No. 577, September 1, 2006a; Michael Cohen, "Just Another Depressing Day at the Office," *Democracy Arsenal*, December 7, 2011; Alex Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, June 2010; Douglas Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, May 2011.

⁷ We are not alone in this urging. Colin Gray asserts, "COIN is neither a concept nor can it be a strategy. Instead, it is simply an acronymic descriptor of a basket of diverse activities

that are hidden in discussions purporting to be about the validity of “COIN,” we are agnostic, but we want COIN to be used only to denote a type of operation and mission without presupposing the approach a counterinsurgent force will take.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Counterinsurgency

While there are many different possible *concepts* for counterinsurgency espoused in the literature (this report evaluates 24 such concepts), there are traditionally two core philosophies (or theories) of counterinsurgency: population-centric and enemy-centric.⁸ The former focuses on the population as “the sea” in which the insurgents “swim” and theorizes that, if the population and its environment are sufficiently controlled, the insurgents will be deprived of the support they need and will wither, be exposed, or some combination thereof, bringing the insurgency to an end.⁹ The enemy-centric paradigm sees insurgency as much more akin to conventional warfare and focuses on the defeat of the enemy as the counterinsurgent’s primary task. Each core philosophy is interpreted by a variety of corollary theories, sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit, that connect to the various concepts advocated for in the literature on COIN, but each concept can be quickly categorized (or pigeonholed) as having antecedents that are either primarily population-centric or primarily enemy-centric.¹⁰

intended to counter an insurgency.” See Colin S. Gray, “Concept Failure? COIN, Counterinsurgency, and Strategic Theory,” *Prism*, Vol. 3, No. 3, June 2012, p. 17.

⁸ David Kilcullen, “Two Schools of Classical Counterinsurgency,” *Small Wars Journal Blog*, January 27, 2007.

⁹ “The guerrilla must move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea.” Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith II, Chicago, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

¹⁰ Some scholars have argued that proponents of the population-centric theory of COIN have come to dominate any discussion of counterinsurgency by utilizing “select historical interpretations” to bolster their argument. See Jeffrey H. Michaels and Matthew Ford, “Bandwagonistas: Rhetorical Re-Description, Strategic Choice, and the Politics of Counterinsurgency,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, May 2011.

Both philosophies can claim historical successes, and both have a sensible logic with face validity: On the population-centric side, insurgents denied access to and support from the population will be easily defeated as fish out of water; on the insurgent-focused side, clearly, an insurgency ceases to exist when its ranks have been depleted and a sufficient number of its fighters have been killed or captured. Despite these sensible logics, each can easily be portrayed as something ridiculous and extreme. Population-centric COIN gets caricaturized as expensive, long-term nation building that forbids troops from using their weapons.¹¹ Enemy-centric COIN gets depicted as unconstrained, scorched-earth violence, so alienating the population (and the rest of the world) that for every insurgent killed, ten new recruits step up to take his or her place.¹² Although opponents of one view or the other might wish to believe otherwise, population-centric and enemy-centric logics do not follow an “either/or” dynamic; they can be pursued in tandem, with the COIN force seeking to deny the insurgents the support of the population while simultaneously seeking to reduce the insurgents through decisive action. Still, the two philosophies are meaningfully distinct, as they involve different logics and are buttressed by different concepts and activities, even if the proper balance between those activities remains an open question.

While the population-centric/insurgent-centric duality is the classic division in discussions on counterinsurgency, our research adds nuance and promotes slightly different divisions. Rather than a single dichotomy, we propose two, establishing a spectrum between two forms of COIN actions: those aimed at diminishing motive versus strictly kinetic actions (using force to kill, capture, or constrain). We consider a similar spectrum for two forms of COIN targets: active insurgents and insurgent support.

¹¹ Another critique of population-centric COIN is the “untenable premise” that populations are static, when, in fact, people tend to move around, especially in times of conflict. Eric Jardine, “Population-Centric Counterinsurgency and the Movement of Peoples,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, May 2012a.

¹² Nathan Springer, “Many Paths up the Mountain: Population-Centric COIN in Afghanistan,” *Small Wars Journal*, May 2010.

Our previous study, reported in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, discovered that insurgents' continued ability to maintain their tangible support (recruits, weapons and materiel, funding, intelligence, sanctuary) is more important than where that support comes from (the population or an outside actor) in determining the outcome of an insurgency; this study confirmed that finding. This suggests that rather than distinguishing between a focus on the population and a focus on the enemy, it would be better to distinguish between a focus on the enemy and a focus on the enemy's sources of support, which may or may not come from the population.

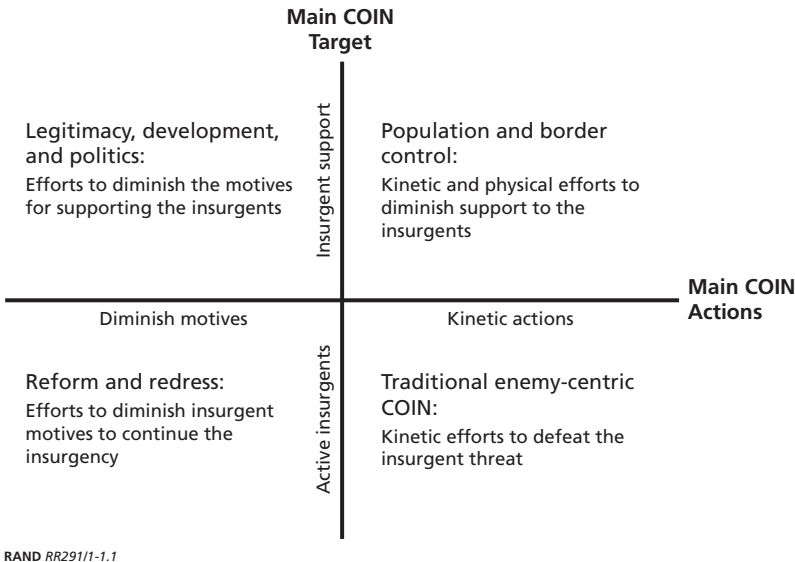
Historically, COIN forces have diminished insurgent tangible support in a variety of ways: reducing the willingness of the population to offer support, reducing the opportunity for the population to offer support (through various measures to control or influence the population),¹³ physically interdicting the routes by which support flows, and reaching international political agreements to end cross-border support, among others. This leads to the other key dichotomy, because support was reduced either by assuaging the supporters' motive for providing support or by physically reducing their opportunity or ability to do so. This dichotomy can also be applied to efforts to enervate insurgents: They can be subject to physical action and captured, wounded, or killed, or the COIN force can reduce the insurgents' motives for fighting, leading them to surrender, accept an amnesty offer, or simply disappear back into civilian life.

These two dichotomies divide the theoretical space into four quadrants, as depicted in Figure 1.1. Every COIN concept can be categorized within this typology, according to whether it is more focused on targeting insurgent support or the insurgents themselves and whether it emphasizes kinetic solutions or motive-focused solutions. Historical COIN campaigns can be categorized in the same way.

Each of the 71 historical cases informing this report follows one of two COIN paths and falls broadly into two categories in this typol-

¹³ Such efforts can either be enforced by an external actor or maintained *by* and *with* the population. Thomas Rid, "The Nineteenth Century Origins of Counterinsurgency Doctrine," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, October 2010, Vol. 33, No. 5.

Figure 1.1
New COIN Dichotomies: Targeting Insurgent Support Versus Active Insurgents and Efforts to Diminish Insurgent Motives Versus Employing Kinetic Approaches



ogy. COIN campaigns on the “iron fist” path fall primarily into the lower right quadrant, with a focus on kinetic actions against the active insurgency. The more effective of these primarily enemy-focused campaigns also devoted some effort to reducing insurgents’ support, but almost always in an exclusively physical way (upper right quadrant). COIN campaigns on the motive-focused path fall primarily into the upper left quadrant, with a focus on reducing the motives for supporting or participating in the insurgency. Unlike the iron fist counterinsurgencies, the motive-focused efforts, though primarily on the motive-focused side of the equation, were often balanced with kinetic efforts to kill, capture, or constrain active insurgents (waxing over into the lower right and occasionally the upper right quadrants).¹⁴ We return to

¹⁴ Staniland and Greenhill have decried a one-size-fits-all approach to COIN, noting that “privileging ideal-type strategies runs the risk of creating false dichotomies between approaches, whereas successful COIN requires mixtures of these approaches, not an embrace

these two paths, iron fist and motive-focused, when we describe how we divided the cases into subpopulations for further analysis in Chapter Three. These analyses found that primarily motive-focused and balanced COIN campaigns are much more likely to be successful than strictly iron fist efforts (see Chapter Six).

Data and Analyses

The research presented here tests 24 concepts for COIN drawn from the existing literature against the record of history. Moving beyond validation through one or two case studies, this research assembles a significant and systematic foundation of evidence from which to assess COIN concepts: detailed case studies of the 71 insurgencies begun and resolved across the globe between World War II (WWII) and 2010.¹⁵ Each case is supported by a detailed case narrative and by quantitative data for nearly 300 individual factors. These analyses benefited considerably from having both quantitative and qualitative data and from being able to move back and forth between the two. Qualitative narratives suggested factors or hypotheses, which were then tested comparatively across cases using the quantitative data. Points that did not make sense in the quantitative analyses were explored in the detailed narratives, with the nuance from the narratives then being subjected to the quantitative analyses in the form of new hypotheses or factors.

Chapter Two describes the cases and case selection. In addition to considering findings across all 71 cases, we identify several subsamples, or classes, of cases of specific interest in Chapter Three. These include the 59 core cases (excluding poor comparative examples, such as the COIN campaigns fought against the postcolonial wars of inde-

of any single one.” Kelly M. Greenhill and Paul Staniland, “Ten Ways to Lose at Counterinsurgency,” *Civil Wars*, Vol. 9, No. 4, December 2007, p. 404.

¹⁵ This broad empirical basis allows us to avoid three logical traps that much of the contemporary debate fails to escape: (1) the trap of ongoing operations (what we are seeing now is what we will always see); (2) the trap of individual cases (what happened in one particular case tells us about what could or should happen in all cases); and (3) the trap of bad analogy (every U.S. COIN effort is like Vietnam).

pendence); the 44 iron fist cases in which the COIN force sought to prevail predominantly through the vigorous application of force; the 15 motive-focused, or balanced, cases in which COIN forces emphasized efforts to diminish the motives for the insurgency and its supporters over (or in balance with) the application of force; and the 28 cases in which an external actor (another country) committed military forces in support, further subdivided into the 13 cases in which the external actor committed only advisers, special operations forces, or air power and the 15 cases in which the external actor committed significant ground troops, up to and including cases in which external forces were—or were for a time—the primary COIN force. Our findings provide strong empirical support for some COIN concepts and strong evidence against others, as discussed in Chapter Four.

By analyzing the patterns of practices and factors that characterize COIN wins and COIN losses in these cases, we move beyond the testing of recommended COIN concepts. We developed a list of “good” and “bad” factors based, first, on strong *a priori* grounding in existing COIN literature and, second, on relationships observed in our data during preliminary analyses. Examining the patterns of presence or absence of these practices and factors in the data, we reached several interesting conclusions regarding the differences between those who defeated insurgencies and those who did not, which COIN practices were critical to success, what factors are correlated with the durations of insurgencies, and what factors are correlated with the length of post-conflict peace intervals. Details of these results and supporting analyses are presented in Chapters Four and Five.

About This Report and Accompanying Case Studies

The remainder of this report is organized as follows. Chapter Two describes the methods used to identify the 71 insurgencies begun and resolved since WWII, details how we collected data for our case studies, and presents brief historical summaries of the 71 cases. Chapter Three identifies various subsets or subpopulations within the 71 cases that are most appropriate for answering certain kinds

of questions. That analysis found that some of the cases, while individually interesting, are simply not good cases for comparison, so we constrained most analyses to the 59 core cases within the larger data set. Chapter Four introduces the 24 COIN concepts identified in the literature, describes the factors that represent them in the analysis, and tests them against the record of history by considering the impact of their implementation on the outcomes of the 59 core cases. Chapter Five describes our analyses of the impact on case outcomes of different *patterns* of practices and factors that are present or absent in the cases. That chapter also discusses the development and validation of a list of “good” and “bad” COIN practices and our attempt to mathematically reduce the host of strongly supported concepts for COIN to a minimally sufficient set. Chapter Five also examines factors that contribute to the duration of insurgencies and to the length of post-conflict peace intervals. Chapter Six presents the results of the analyses repeated for the various subsamples (iron fist versus motive-focused and external actor cases). Chapter Seven draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

Seven appendixes and an accompanying volume of case studies support this report. Appendix A provides extensive methodological details supporting our analyses. Appendix B offers technical background and detailed results of one of the analyses conducted as part of the research, qualitative comparative analysis. Appendix C offers similar details for another technique used, survival analysis. Appendix D reviews the key findings from the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* study in light of the new data and analyses. Appendix E lists all the factors included in the data set for each phase of each of the 71 cases. (The full data are provided in a spreadsheet that accompanies this report.) Appendix F contains the checkbox scorecard that guided the analyses presented in Chapter Five; Appendix G presents scorecard scores for the 59 core cases based on that scorecard. Detailed case narratives for the 41 new cases added to the database for this analysis appear in a companion volume, *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies*. Yet another separate volume, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*, companion to the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in*

Counterinsurgency, contains a detailed case narrative for each of the original 30 COIN cases.¹⁶

¹⁶ Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill, and Molly Dunigan, *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-291/2-OSD, 2013; Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Studies*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-964/1-OSD, 2010a; and Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-964-OSD, 2010b.

The Cases

Seventy-one cases of insurgency form the empirical foundation for this research. This chapter begins by describing the process used to select the cases and to collect data for them, as well as how we determined whether the outcome of a case was a win or a loss for COIN forces. The bulk of the chapter, however, is devoted to brief summaries of each of the 71 cases. More extensive case-study details can be found in the accompanying volume, *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies* (for the 41 new cases), and in the previously published case-study volume, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies* (for the 30 cases studied as part of that earlier research effort).¹

Case Selection and Data Collection

The 71 cases explored here were drawn, in part, from a larger list of historical insurgencies developed by Martin Libicki as part of a previous RAND COIN study.² That initial list included 89 cases and purports

¹ Paul, Clarke, Grill, and Dunigan, 2013; Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010a.

² Martin C. Libicki, "Eighty-Nine Insurgencies: Outcomes and Endings," in David C. Gompert, John Gordon IV, Adam Grissom, David R. Frelinger, Seth G. Jones, Martin C. Libicki, Edward O'Connell, Brooke K. Stearns, and Robert E. Hunter, *War by Other Means: Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-595/2-OSD, 2008, pp. 373–396. The initial case list was drawn from James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1, February 2003.

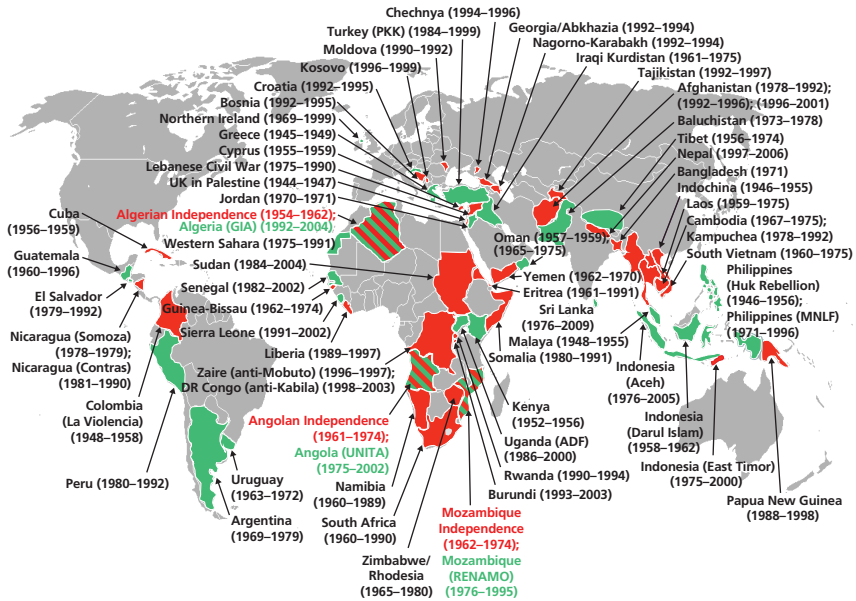
to be an exhaustive collection of insurgencies from 1934 to 2010. All cases met the following criteria:

- They involved fighting between states and nonstates seeking to take control of a government or region or that used violence to change government policies.
- The conflict killed at least 1,000 people over its course, with a yearly average of at least 100.
- At least 100 people were killed on both sides (including civilians attacked by rebels).
- They were not coups, countercoups, or insurrections.

To this set of 89, we added four cases from a separate list prepared by the Center for Army Analysis and The Dupuy Institute that were missing but appeared to meet Libicki's criteria, giving us a total of 93 cases.³ From these 93 cases, we excluded 17 conflicts still considered ongoing or unresolved, which included not only conflicts listed as unresolved on Libicki's list but also two conflicts listed as resolved whose completion our analysts disputed: Burma (1948–2006) and Philippines (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) (1977–2006). We then excluded one conflict that began before WWII: China (1934–1950); two conflicts that were not clear-cut cases of insurgency but were, rather, insurrections followed by massive superpower interventions: Lebanon (1958–1959) and Dominican Republic (1965–1966); one case that was more akin to a “police action”: Congo/Katanga (1960–1965); and one case that was less an insurgency and more of a coup (and thus should have been excluded by Libicki): Biafran Secession (1967–1970). These reductions left 71 cases, 30 of which were examined as case studies in the *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* research and 41 new cases. This set of 71 cases captures all insurgencies worldwide begun and completed between WWII and 2010. The cases span 61 countries and much of the globe (see Figure 2.1). Appendix A provides further detail on the case selection process.

³ See Christopher A. Lawrence, “The Analysis of the Historical Effectiveness of Different Counterinsurgency Tactics and Strategies,” *The Cornwallis Group XIII: Analysis of Societal Conflict and Counterinsurgency*, Nova Scotia, Canada: Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, 2008.

Figure 2.1
Map of 71 COIN Case Dates, Countries, and Outcomes



NOTE: Green shading indicates that the COIN force prevailed (or had the better of a mixed outcome), while red shading indicates that the outcome favored the insurgent (thus, a COIN loss). Green and red stripes indicate multiple cases in a single country with different outcomes; in these instances, the color of the case name and time span corresponds to the outcome.

RAND RR291/1-2.1

We collected data for the case studies from secondary sources. The analyst assigned to each case thoroughly reviewed the available English-language history and secondary analysis of the conflict. Documentation proved voluminous for some cases (particularly those in Central and South America but also cases in which Russian or Soviet forces were involved); it was much more sparse for other cases (particularly those in Africa). In all cases, available information was sufficient to meet our data needs for the quantitative analyses (presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six). The references listed at the end of the accompanying volume of case studies demonstrate the range and depth of the available literature.

Phased Data

Because the approach and behavior of the COIN force, the actions of insurgents, and other important conditions can all change over the course of an insurgency, we broke all of the cases into between one and five phases. A detailed discussion of each phase of each case for the 41 new cases can be found in the accompanying volume; full narratives for the 30 cases included in the earlier research can be found in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*.⁴ Appendix A includes additional discussion of the phase assignment process in the section “Phased Data.”

The phases are not uniform in duration. A new phase was declared when the case analyst recognized a significant shift in the COIN approach, in the approach of the insurgents, or in the overall conditions of the case. Phases were *not* intended to capture microchanges or tight cycles of adaptation and counteradaptation between the insurgents and the COIN force; rather, these were macro-level and sea-change phases. Throughout the report, *case data* refers to the data for a single phase, the decisive phase of the case. Almost all analyses are at the case level and consider only the decisive phase, but some analyses consider data across phases within a case.

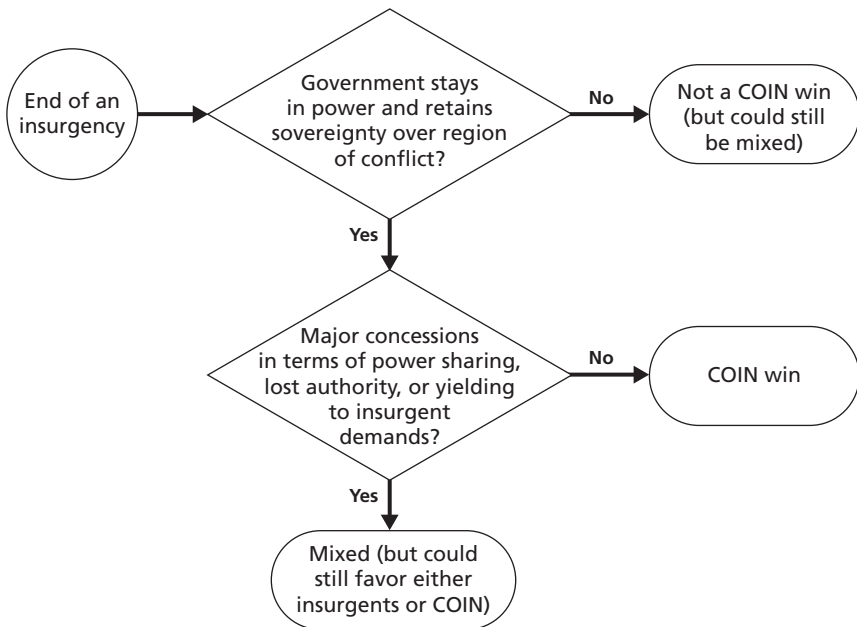
Assessing Case Outcomes

Because our analysis focuses on correlates of success in COIN, one of the most important elements of our case studies is the identification of the outcome of the cases (i.e., whether COIN forces actually succeeded). Many of these cases have complicated outcomes, in which neither side realized all of its stated objectives, and when the conflict was officially over—that is, when the fighting ceased—it was not exactly clear which side prevailed. While we report mixed outcomes in our case narratives, we also identify each case as either a COIN win or a COIN loss.

⁴ Paul, Clarke, Grill, and Dunigan, 2013; Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010a.

To adjudicate unclear case outcomes, we followed the logic illustrated in Figure 2.2. First, for each case, we asked whether the government targeted by the insurgency stayed in power through the end of the conflict and whether it retained sovereignty over the region of conflict. If insurgents either deposed (or otherwise led to the fall of) the government or won de facto control of a separatist region, then the COIN force did *not* win. If the government remained in power and the country intact, then we further considered whether the government had been forced to (or chose to) make major concessions to the insurgents, such as through power sharing or loss of territory or other sovereign control, or was otherwise forced to yield to insurgent demands. If the government stayed in power, the country remained intact, and no major concessions were granted to the insurgents, then the COIN force unambiguously won. If, however, major concessions were made,

Figure 2.2
Logic for Assignment of Case Outcomes



SOURCE: Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xiv, Figure S.2.

RAND RR291/1-2.2

then the outcome was mixed. In all cases, what constituted a “major” concession and who (the COIN force or the insurgents) had the better of a mixed outcome was determined at the discretion of the individual case analyst and was based on the distinct narrative of that case.

Applying this logic to the 71 cases resulted in 29 COIN wins and 42 COIN losses. Table 2.1 lists the insurgencies, the dates they spanned, and their respective outcomes.

Table 2.1
Countries, Date Spans, and Outcomes of the 71 Case-Study Insurgencies

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Outcome
UK in Palestine	1944–1947	COIN loss
Greece	1945–1949	COIN win
Indochina	1946–1955	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Philippines (Huk Rebellion)	1946–1956	COIN win
Colombia (La Violencia)	1948–1958	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Malaya	1948–1955	COIN win
Kenya	1952–1956	COIN win
Algerian Independence	1954–1962	COIN loss
Cyprus	1955–1959	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Cuba	1956–1959	COIN loss
Oman (Imamate Uprising)	1957–1959	COIN win
Indonesia (Darul Islam)	1958–1962	COIN win
Tibet	1956–1974	COIN win
Guatemala	1960–1996	COIN win
Laos	1959–1975	COIN loss
Namibia	1960–1989	COIN loss
South Africa	1960–1990	COIN loss
South Vietnam	1960–1975	COIN loss
Eritrea	1961–1991	COIN loss
Iraqi Kurdistan	1961–1975	COIN win
Angolan Independence	1961–1974	COIN loss
Guinea-Bissau	1962–1974	COIN loss

Table 2.1—Continued

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Outcome
Mozambique Independence	1962–1974	COIN loss
Yemen	1962–1970	COIN loss
Uruguay	1963–1972	COIN win
Oman (Dhofar Rebellion)	1965–1975	COIN win
Zimbabwe/Rhodesia	1965–1980	COIN loss
Argentina	1969–1979	COIN win
Cambodia	1967–1975	COIN loss
Northern Ireland	1969–1999	COIN win (mixed, favoring COIN)
Jordan	1970–1971	COIN win
Bangladesh	1971	COIN loss
Philippines (Moro National Liberation Front [MNLF])	1971–1996	COIN win (mixed, favoring COIN)
Baluchistan	1973–1978	COIN win
Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola [UNITA])	1975–2002	COIN win
Indonesia (East Timor)	1975–2000	COIN loss
Lebanese Civil War	1975–1990	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Western Sahara	1975–1991	COIN win (mixed, favoring COIN)
Indonesia (Aceh)	1976–2005	COIN win (mixed, favoring COIN)
Mozambique (Mozambican National Resistance [RENAMO])	1976–1995	COIN win (mixed, favoring COIN)
Sri Lanka	1976–2009	COIN win
Nicaragua (Somoza)	1978–1979	COIN loss
Afghanistan (anti-Soviet)	1978–1992	COIN loss
Kampuchea	1978–1992	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
El Salvador	1979–1992	COIN win (mixed, favoring COIN)
Somalia	1980–1991	COIN loss
Peru	1980–1992	COIN win

Table 2.1—Continued

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Outcome
Nicaragua (Contras)	1981–1990	COIN loss
Senegal	1982–2002	COIN win
Turkey (Kurdistan Workers' Party [PKK])	1984–1999	COIN win
Sudan (Sudan People's Liberation Army [SPLA])	1984–2004	COIN loss
Uganda (Allied Democratic Forces [ADF])	1986–2000	COIN win
Papua New Guinea	1988–1998	COIN loss
Liberia	1989–1997	COIN loss
Rwanda	1990–1994	COIN loss
Moldova	1990–1992	COIN loss
Sierra Leone	1991–2002	COIN win
Algeria (Armed Islamic Group [GIA])	1992–2004	COIN win
Croatia	1992–1995	COIN win
Afghanistan (post-Soviet)	1992–1996	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Tajikistan	1992–1997	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Georgia/Abkhazia	1992–1994	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Nagorno-Karabakh	1992–1994	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Bosnia	1992–1995	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Burundi	1993–2003	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Chechnya I	1994–1996	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)
Afghanistan (Taliban)	1996–2001	COIN loss
Zaire (anti-Mobutu)	1996–1997	COIN loss
Kosovo	1996–1999	COIN loss
Nepal	1997–2006	COIN loss
Democratic Republic of the Congo (anti-Kabila)	1998–2003	COIN loss (mixed, favoring insurgents)

NOTE: For details on outcome scoring and categories, see the section "Outcome Assessment" in Appendix A.

The remainder of this chapter presents brief summaries of the historical cases. They are presented chronologically by start date. Analyses of the relationships between specific concepts and factors and the case outcomes are presented in Chapters Three and Four. For completeness, all 71 cases used in these analyses are summarized here, even though only 41 of the cases are new to this effort. Those familiar with the histories of these cases are welcome to skip ahead.

UK in Palestine, 1944–1947

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Fought against the tide of history (postcolonialism)

In 1923, following its confirmation by the League of Nations, the British Mandate for Palestine became the legal commission for the administration of Palestine. It was British limitations on Jewish immigration into Palestine—which had been established as a Jewish homeland under the terms of the mandate—that spurred three underground Jewish organizations to launch an insurgency against the mandatory government. During the conflict, as many as 100,000 British soldiers, plus mandatory police and British Special Air Service forces, were involved in the conflict. The counterinsurgents' tactics included extensive cordon-and-search operations, massive numbers of arrests and detentions, and the imposition of martial law in some areas. Although these tactics were generally successful, the British were not as highly motivated as the insurgents in this conflict. Fighting against the tide of history, they ultimately capitulated in late 1947, withdrawing from Palestine.

Greece, 1945–1949

Case Outcome: COIN Win

As the Nazi occupation of Greece during WWII drew to a close and the Greek government in exile returned, the country's predominant communist insurgent group, the National Popular Liberation Army, decided not to demobilize. Instead, it attempted to seize power in Athens to avoid a return to the prewar political status quo. The British quickly came to the government's rescue, defending Athens with 75,000 British troops and forcing a quick and apparently successful

surrender by the insurgents. However, many of the insurgents merely went underground, only to reemerge almost two years later to lead the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE), which aimed to democratize the country. With the Greek military still in the process of rebuilding itself after WWII, the insurgents were able to seize the upper hand in the second phase of the conflict. The DSE benefited substantially from the safe havens and external support provided by Greece's communist neighbors, which enabled the group to withstand the extensive military troops, training, and assistance that the British provided to the COIN effort. During the final phase of the conflict, external conditions led to a withdrawal of British support and its replacement by U.S. military aid, provided under the Truman Doctrine. At the same time, the insurgents' primary ally, Yugoslavia, closed its borders to their operations. Meanwhile, the insurgents made the strategic miscalculation of adopting conventional tactics prematurely, thus aiding the COIN force in securing a victory over the insurgency.

Indochina, 1946–1955

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

French efforts to reclaim their lost colony after the conclusion of WWII appeared to get off to a good start but ultimately became too costly (in blood, treasure, and concessions). While the French maintained air and conventional battlefield superiority throughout the conflict, Viet Minh insurgents learned to expose themselves to that technical superiority only when the French could be significantly outnumbered, leading to a mixed conflict of constant low-intensity guerrilla warfare punctuated by short, sharp, and numerically overwhelming conventional engagements. Jungle and mountain terrain decisively supported this approach.

The conflict turned to favor the insurgents after the Chinese Revolution in 1949, with 1950 bringing support to the insurgents from both the Chinese and the Soviets. Even with a massive influx of U.S. money and materiel, French firepower and political concessions were insufficient to defeat a numerically superior foe that could and did use the jungle to blunt French air power, constrain French maneuver capabilities, stretch French supply lines, and conceal insurgent movements.

After the ignominious defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the 1954 Geneva conference divided Indochina at the 17th parallel and set the stage (or perhaps, baited the trap) for much greater U.S. investment in fighting communists in Vietnam.

Philippines (Huk Rebellion), 1946–1956

Case Outcome: COIN Win

An agrarian peasant movement aimed at reducing economic and social inequality, the Hukbalahap (“Huk,” for short) insurgency was initially successful in winning extensive local support and perpetrating guerrilla attacks and robberies against a newly independent Philippine government. However, the Huks’ increasing violence and the addition of common criminals to their ranks led the government to appoint a liberal congressman and former provincial military governor, Ramon Magsaysay, to the post of secretary of defense in September 1950. Magsaysay’s appointment marked a turning point in the conflict, and he instituted sweeping reforms that succeeded in drying up civilian support for the insurgency, decreasing government and military corruption, and increasing the COIN force’s tactical effectiveness against the Huks. These reforms fortuitously coincided with strategic errors on the part of the insurgents, as well as the addition of U.S. financial and military support. All of these factors combined to lead the COIN force to victory in the conflict’s final phase.

Colombia (“La Violencia”), 1948–1958

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

“La Violencia” in Colombia was a distinctive case in which an internal political conflict rose to the level of all-out civil war for a decade before culminating in a negotiated powersharing agreement. Beginning as an ideologically and politically motivated insurgency/revolution fought by Liberal Party members and supporters against the suppression of their political power by Conservatives in the government, La Violencia morphed into an economically motivated conflict involving extensive rural banditry. The COIN force, composed of both the national police and the armed forces, employed a number of good practices at times,

such as measures designed to win popular support. However, they did so inconsistently over the course of the conflict. In the final phases of the conflict, the government and COIN forces under President Gustavo Rojas Pinilla became so repressive, and the Colombian economy deteriorated to such an extent, that Liberal and Conservative Party leaders on the sidelines were willing to overlook their differences and reach a compromise to both unseat Rojas Pinilla and form a coalition government.

Malaya, 1948–1955

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The British had already begun to cede government control back to the Malayan states following WWII, establishing a system whereby the states retained sovereignty under British protection. Still, dismayed at the extent of their disenfranchisement under the new government, Chinese communists launched a Maoist guerrilla war to expel the British from the country in 1948. Beginning the conflict with an under-strength military and police force, the British immediately created a sizable special constabulary, employing conventional tactics and large-scale jungle sweeps that proved wholly ineffective. However, the COIN force ultimately adapted to shifts in insurgent strategy over the course of the conflict, and the second phase ushered in a COIN strategy focused on population and spatial control as part of the Briggs Plan's massive resettlements. These strategies were largely successful and were continued and improved upon under the policies of Sir Gerald Templer. Along with efforts to win the "hearts and minds" of the population, Templer's focus on improved intelligence, as well as a better organized and larger COIN force and efforts to reach a political settlement to the conflict, contributed to the COIN force's success by 1960 by the time the conflict officially ended in 1960 (violence was infrequent following parliamentary elections in 1955). Notably, the Britain's efforts in Malaya are often held up as a paradigm of effective British COIN practice.

Kenya, 1952–1956

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Fought against the tide of history (postcolonialism)

The Mau Mau Rebellion was a brutal conflict that affected all of Kenya's Kikuyu people. The rebellion was an anticolonial struggle aimed at expelling the British colonial government from Kenya due to grievances over land rights, pay for African workers, and the underrepresentation of the Kikuyu people in politics. Entailing gross humanitarian abuses on both sides throughout all phases of the conflict, the main COIN strategies employed involved large-scale sweeps, arrests, detentions, and resettlement programs that were quite indiscriminate in nature. While the COIN force enjoyed the support of a majority of the Kikuyu people at the outset of hostilities, repressive COIN tactics were pushing the Kikuyu over to the insurgents' side by the second phase of the conflict. British and local COIN forces did win back some extent of popular support (particularly in the detention centers), but popular support, on the whole, does not appear to have been decisive in this conflict. Rather, it was the repressive, indiscriminate, and overwhelming force employed by the COIN force that eventually broke the back of the insurgency. This COIN success did not prevail over the long term, however, and Britain ultimately granted Kenya's independence less than a decade after the conclusion of the rebellion.

Algerian Independence, 1954–1962

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Fought against the tide of history (postcolonialism)

Three hundred members of the National Liberation Front (FLN) guerrilla movement launched the French-Algerian conflict in 1954 with a series of uncoordinated bombing attacks, seeking an end to French colonial rule. Initially dismissed as "traditional banditry," the FLN attacks drew an increasingly forceful response from France as the insurgents gained strength and began targeting the French settler community. As a result, the French military employed brutal COIN tactics against Algeria's native Muslim population. France became more entrenched in battle in 1957 after the FLN initiated a campaign of

urban terrorism in the city of Algiers. French special forces responded with roundups of civilians, “disappearances,” and the systematic use of torture in interrogations that roused international condemnation. While the army was able to make significant tactical gains against the FLN with its subsequent employment of a system of quadrillage and the construction of *cordons sanitaires* along Algeria’s borders, France was unable to recover from the political losses it incurred in the Battle for Algiers. After President Charles de Gaulle assumed power in 1958, the French army adopted more effective COIN tactics that targeted the FLN and provided humanitarian assistance to local communities, yet de Gaulle eventually announced his support for Algerian autonomy. This decision was violently opposed by members of the French settler community and radical army officers and led to the outbreak of a wave of attacks against Algerian Muslims and French officials. The violence ultimately failed to impede negotiations on France’s withdrawal, however. After eight years of brutal conflict, the French government was forced to succumb to the growing pressure from the Algerian population, the public in metropolitan France and the international community to end the war and concede its political, if not its military, defeat.

Cyprus, 1955–1959

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Fought against the tide of history (postcolonialism)

The National Organization of Cypriot Struggle (EOKA), a nationalist, anti-colonialist insurgent organization composed of Greek Cypriots, launched a guerrilla conflict against the British colonial government in Cyprus in April 1955. Its aim was to compel the British colonial government to disperse its forces and cede Cyprus to Greece. Greek Cypriots were the predominant ethnic group in Cyprus at the time, and EOKA was a predominantly youth-based movement that had the support of more than 80 percent of the population and was also popular in neighboring Greece. Due to this extensive support, the insurgents were able to prevail despite the British colonial administration’s reorganization of its COIN force structure, its imposition of martial law, and the creation of a Turkish-Cypriot paramilitary organization that actively supported the British in the second phase of the conflict.

The hostilities ended in 1959 with a settlement negotiated by Britain, Greece, and Turkey that called for Cyprus to be granted its independence under a power-sharing constitution designed to allow representation for both Greek and Turkish Cypriots. However, this settlement did little more than intensify the acrimony between the two ethnic groups, and another war broke just four years later that left the country divided along ethnic lines.

Cuba, 1956–1959

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Leading a socialist insurgency in Cuba beginning in 1956, Fidel Castro presented himself as aiming to restore a legitimate democratic system on the island. He was successful due to both internal and external factors. Internally, Castro's mastery of propaganda and his appreciation of the importance of local support for an insurgency paid off, and he continually won both local civilians and Cuban army personnel over to his side. In contrast, the COIN force opposing Castro was poorly trained, corrupt, and suffered from low morale, which led it to engage in activities that alienated the population. External support to the COIN force from the United States, primarily in the form of military equipment and weapons, served only to prolong the conflict by propping up a corrupt and mismanaged Cuban regime. The United States eventually withdrew its support following Cuban President Fulgencio Batista's loss of popular legitimacy on the island. The conflict subsequently ended with an insurgent win and Batista's exile on January 1, 1959.

Oman (Imamate Uprising), 1957–1959

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Long-standing tensions between sultanate rulers in the coastal regions of Oman and rebellious tribes in the interior of the country fueled a separatist insurgency led by the religious Imamate in 1957. Saudi Arabia and Egypt supported the imamate forces, enabling them to maintain the upper hand in the conflict until the British intervened to shore up the sultan's limited defenses. The British initially contained the rebels' advance by offering minimal ground troops and air support

to the Omani armed forces. Later, when the rebels retreated and began an intensive guerrilla campaign from their safe haven in the northern Jebel Akhdar Mountains, London offered more targeted military assistance, which included designated Royal Air Force aircraft and seconded British officers to command the sultan's armed forces. It was not until the British engaged its Special Air Service in the conflict to conduct an assault on the rebels' mountain redoubt, however, that the sultanate forces were able to establish full control over the interior of the country and achieve a decisive victory over the imamate insurgency.

Indonesia (Darul Islam), 1958–1962

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The Darul Islam insurgency was a politically and religiously motivated rebellion that challenged the centralization policies of the newly independent Indonesian government and sought to establish sharia law. Throughout the 1950s, Darul Islam conducted an increasingly effective guerrilla campaign in West Java against a weak Indonesian army that was unable to provide adequate security to the population. As the insurgency threatened to spread to other regions of the country and pose a legitimate challenge President Sukarno's regime, the Indonesian government adopted a comprehensive pacification strategy in 1959 that was able to change the course of the conflict. The strategy combined civic action with cordon-and-search tactics and the forced engagement of the local population in security operations through a technique called *pagar bettis*, or "fence of legs." Within the course of three years—and benefiting from a lack of international scrutiny of its harsh COIN policies—the Indonesian army was able to restrict the insurgents' territory and eliminate the leadership of the Darul Islam movement to achieve a decisive victory over the insurgents.

Tibet, 1956–1974

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The National Volunteer Defense Army at first posed a significant challenge to a heavy-handed Chinese occupying COIN force and, later, occupying government. While the COIN force practiced excessively

brutal and demeaning tactics to assimilate Tibetans into the Chinese way of life, the relative deprivation of the population precluded any possibility of civilian assistance to the insurgents. External support from the United States and India prolonged the conflict and bought time for (and the possibility of) an insurgent win. However, a series of tactical and operational errors by the insurgents, exacerbated by intermittent suspensions of external aid and the overwhelming force employed by the Chinese to crush the insurgency, eventually led to the insurgents' downfall. The conflict ended with a COIN win following Nepal's withdrawal of territorial access from the insurgents in 1973.

Guatemala, 1960–1996

Case Outcome: COIN Win

For a 36-year period between 1960 and 1996, Guatemala suffered the effects of a bloody insurgency in which approximately 200,000 people were killed or “disappeared,” with an additional 2 million internally displaced or exiled as refugees. The COIN force consisted of the Guatemalan government and armed forces, the traditional elite, and landowners, while the insurgents were a mix of leftists, nationalistic-socialist reformers, middle-class intellectuals, and peasants. Guatemala's COIN campaign employed extremely brutal tactics against the insurgents and their base of support, particularly the country's indigenous population. U.S. support during the first phase of the conflict included training and funding, which assisted the Guatemalans in smashing the insurgency and sending its remaining fighters fleeing to the hills. Not bound to the same standards as its U.S. partners, the Guatemalan government looked the other way as right-wing paramilitaries routinely raped, murdered, and mutilated civilians at will, leading Washington to distance itself from any tacit affiliation for extended periods of the conflict. Eventually, a war-weary population and a beleaguered government agreed to negotiations with an umbrella group of guerrillas, addressing a wide range of grievances and working to rebuild a country whose infrastructure was decimated by ongoing violence and instability.

Laos, 1959–1975

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Lamented as “the forgotten war,” the insurgency in Laos was heavily influenced (and often overshadowed) by the conflict in neighboring Vietnam. A victim of geography, Laos experienced half-hearted fighting between different factions and may well have worked itself out in a lasting compromise if not for pressure from North Vietnamese communists to control areas of the country for the infiltration of troops and materiel into South Vietnam (the Ho Chi Min trail) and U.S. efforts to oppose the communist presence and influence.

Beginning in earnest in 1959, fighting pitted variously rightist Royal Lao forces supported by Hmong guerrillas against the leftist Pathet Lao (indigenous communists) and their North Vietnamese supporters. These participants were joined at times by other players, including U.S. advisers, Filipino troops, U.S. air power, Thai commandos and artillery formations, and “neutralist” Lao forces. Of the domestic forces, only the Hmong guerrillas were ever particularly effective. When fighting was primarily among the Lao, it tended toward stalemate. Periods of heavy North Vietnamese involvement, however, always led to substantial gains by the insurgents, who were fought off only with significant intervention on the government’s side. After months of wrangling, 1962 finally saw another Geneva agreement, this time for a neutralized Laos with a coalition government representing the three major factions: the rightists, the leftists, and the neutralists. Part of the neutralization agreement included the removal of foreign forces from Laos. This agreement was only ever marginally embraced by the various external players, and ultimately served to improve the communist position. Consolidating their gains and marshaling their strength, the communists again quit the government and fighting increased in intensity.

By the time of the 1973 cease-fire and neutralization, the government of Laos controlled little more than the capital and the Mekong River valley—and that only by virtue of the Hmong and U.S. air power. With the withdrawal of U.S. support (both air power and funding) in 1973, the Hmong were demobilized and the Lao government was left to its fate; it would ultimately fall relatively quickly to the communists.

During the conflict, Laos was underdeveloped in every way: The government was corrupt and ineffective, the economy wholly dependent on outside support, and the military corrupt and ineffective.

Namibia, 1960–1989

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Fought against the tide of history (apartheid)

To quell a burgeoning insurgency in southwestern Africa, South Africa initially deployed the South African Police Service, even as South African COIN forces were stretched thin by the African National Congress (ANC)–led insurgency within the country’s own borders. The first decade of the war involved low-level but consistent fighting and an increasingly assertive insurgent force. Terrain significantly aided the guerrillas in their ability to elude South African security forces that were operating beyond their traditional zones of comfort. At the end of the first phase, the South African military took over responsibility for prosecuting the war and employed a significant special forces component. The COIN force was able to deny the insurgents permanent bases within Namibia and was effective in raiding Angola to strike at South West African People’s Organization (SWAPO) fighters based in that country. SWAPO insurgents teamed with ANC fighters at different stages of the insurgency to conduct joint operations both within and outside Namibian territory. As the COIN forces did in neighboring South Africa, those deployed to Namibia consistently practiced good COIN techniques but fell victim to shifting political tides sweeping the region. The conflict ended when the South African Defense Force agreed to withdraw from Namibia in exchange for Cuban troops’ withdrawal from Angola. Subsequently, SWAPO emerged victorious from a United Nations (UN)–monitored election for a constituent assembly.

South Africa, 1960–1990

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Fought against the tide of history (apartheid)

Nelson Mandela and the ANC fought against the apartheid government of white minority rule in South Africa over a period of more

than 30 years. Along with other antigovernment groups, including the South African Communist Party and various black nationalist groups, the ANC agitated for political change while also following a path toward political violence. The ANC and its armed wing, Umkhunto we Sizwe, or “Spear of the Nation,” waged a protracted campaign of sabotage, assassination, and bombing against a militarily superior South African Defense Force. In the early stages of the conflict, the ANC was unable to establish a robust presence within South Africa itself, so instead, the insurgents operated from bases in other countries favorable to the ANC, including Angola, Namibia, and Mozambique, at different times throughout the conflict. The COIN force was never seriously at risk of being defeated by the insurgents militarily, though the ANC was adept at cultivating political support, both inside and outside of South Africa. COIN force heavy-handedness also took away from the legitimacy of the government. By 1990, international opinion had turned against the government in Pretoria, and apartheid as a system of government was deemed illegitimate, paving the way for Mandela’s ascension to power and the end of white rule in South Africa in 1994.

South Vietnam, 1960–1975

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Historical accounts of the conflict in Vietnam vary widely in the points emphasized and the explanations offered. Disputes are facilitated by the personal experiences of many direct observers who saw or participated in sometimes very different slices of the conflict at different times, at different operational levels, and in different parts of the country. What, if anything, could have been done to change the outcome of the war (and who is to blame for the outcome) remains fairly hotly contested. What the outcome was, however, is not contested: U.S. forces withdrew in 1973, and the Saigon government fell to the combined pressure of the insurgency and North Vietnamese regular forces in April 1975—unequivocally a COIN loss.

The 1954 Geneva agreement divided what is now Vietnam roughly in half. In the few years before the insurgency began in earnest, South Vietnam sought, with U.S. assistance, to build a state to

govern itself and an army to defend itself. Neither effort proved particularly effective. A vigorous rural insurgency that began in 1960 would remove the government's representatives from rural villages and govern in their stead. With significant support from communist North Vietnam, the insurgents spread rapidly. South Vietnamese COIN efforts were heavy-handed, often alienating the rural population and increasing the ease of the insurgents' recruiting. U.S. military aid increased, often at the expense of other forms of development aid, and the United States became increasingly frustrated with the failure of the Saigon government to heed its advice regarding political liberalization and government reform. The year 1963 saw the first of roughly a dozen coups or other changes of government in succession, none being any more effective at governance or COIN than the previous.

The domestic insurgency, bolstered by infiltrations of personnel and materiel from North Vietnam, put sufficient pressure on government forces to prompt the United States to commit combat forces beginning in 1964. This commitment rapidly surged to more than 180,000 U.S. troops by the end of 1965 on the way to a peak of more than 500,000 in 1969. Constrained by a desire to avoid drawing China into the war, U.S. action against North Vietnam would never stem the flow of soldiers and resources to the south, and large-scale sweeps of jungle territory did little to pacify insurgent cadres and their peasant supporters. After 1965, U.S. forces regularly fought not only insurgent guerrillas but also substantial formations of North Vietnamese regulars. Employing air support and overwhelming firepower, the United States almost always prevailed in these engagements, but the south-bound flow of support did not abate.

The infamous Tet Offensive, timed to coincide with the celebration of the lunar new year in early 1968, gave the lie to American claims of a "light at the end of the tunnel" as the insurgents staged coordinated attacks in virtually every urban center in Vietnam. Though psychologically devastating, these attacks were quickly beaten back, with heavy losses inflicted on the communists. The insurgents would never fully recover their strength, especially in the face of a subsequent new U.S. emphasis on the identification and elimination of their political apparatus and on security and pacification in rural villages. However,

the damage had been done. Although the United States gained ground against the domestic insurgency, pressure from Chinese- and Soviet-armed North Vietnamese regulars continued to increase as domestic American support for the war waned. When the United States withdrew in 1973, it left a large and well-equipped South Vietnamese army that was no match for the combined might of the domestic insurgency and communist regular forces.

Eritrea, 1961–1991

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Ethiopia gained control of the former Italian colony of Eritrea and unilaterally annexed the region in 1962, which led to the outbreak of an insurgency. Initially limited to a small group of guerrilla fighters supported by Arab nationalist regimes, the insurgency developed into a broad-based secessionist movement supported by both the Muslim and Christian Eritrean communities. This broadening of the conflict occurred after the Ethiopian government launched a brutal COIN campaign that resulted in a high number of civilian casualties and significant population displacement. By the mid-1970s, the insurgency posed a serious threat to the Ethiopian regime and contributed to a Marxist coup against the monarchy. The new revolutionary government continued to employ repressive COIN tactics against the Eritrean population. Although it benefited from extensive Soviet military assistance, it could not defeat an increasingly resilient insurgency. Finally, weakened by years of war and famine and suffering from a withdrawal of Soviet support, Ethiopian forces were defeated in Eritrea. As a result, the government in Addis Ababa was toppled in 1991. Insurgent leaders were then able to establish a provisional government in Eritrea and were guaranteed a referendum on independence, which passed in 1993.

Iraqi Kurdistan, 1961–1975

Case Outcome: COIN Win

After decades of contention between the Kurdish minority in northern Iraq and the central government, a rebellion was sparked in 1961 by growing frustration with the nationalist Iraqi government's failure to

deliver on its promise to provide the Kurds with political autonomy. Initially, Kurdish guerrillas, known as *peshmerga*, launched limited small-scale attacks on government forces. The Iraqi army responded with conventional counteroffensives, which served to widen the war and alienate the population. Despite various attempts to reach a cease-fire, fighting grew more intense as both sides benefited from increasing levels of external support from the Soviet Union, Iran, and the United States. Finally, in 1974, *peshmerga* forces, advised by their Iranian and U.S. supporters, attempted to launch a direct conventional attack on the Iraqi regime. This mistaken attempt was met with a full-scale counterassault that enabled the Iraqi forces to penetrate deep into Kurdish territory and threaten their mountain safe havens. Having obtained the military advantage, Iraq solidified its gains by negotiating an agreement with the Shah of Iran to withdraw his critical military support to the Kurds in exchange for a territorial claim to the Shatt al-Arab waterway. Once the Kurdish forces lost the support of the Iranian military, the rebellion was crushed.

Angolan Independence, 1961–1974

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Fought against the tide of history (postcolonialism)

The Angolan war of independence began in earnest in 1961 and continued unabated for the next 13 years. (A follow-on insurgency began immediately afterward and lasted for an additional 27 years.) The insurgency was divided among three separate insurgent groups for most of the first phase but still managed to inflict significant damage on the Portuguese COIN force. In the second phase, the COIN force implemented military and political reforms, separated the insurgents from the population, instituted development programs, and enlisted locals into the security forces. Toward the end of the insurgency, the COIN force had reduced troop casualty rates and began making tangible progress in pacifying the population. However, the April 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal led Lisbon to withdraw from Angola, essentially handing a tailor-made victory to the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

Guinea-Bissau, 1962–1974*Case Outcome: COIN Loss**Fought against the tide of history (postcolonialism)*

Led by Amílcar Lopes Cabral, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) waged an insurgency to overthrow Portuguese colonial rule in Guinea-Bissau. The composition of the insurgency was divided sharply along ethnic lines; the leadership of the PAIGC was almost exclusively Cape Verdean, while most of its foot soldiers were ethnic Guineans. Throughout the conflict, both sides grew weary of the other's intentions, making cohesion more challenging. Of Portugal's three African COIN campaigns, Guinea-Bissau was considered the least valuable, and, as a result, troops fighting there were often left wanting for supplies and resources. The insurgents enjoyed several important advantages, including external sponsorship from a number of countries and safe havens in neighboring French Guinea (Guinea-Conakry). Relentless attacks by PAIGC guerrillas confined the Portuguese to large garrisons, further alienating the COIN force from the population. Despite a change in leadership in the second phase, which resulted in a reequipped and resupplied COIN force conducting operations beyond their garrisons, domestic political events in Portugal led to a withdrawal of troops and the establishment of an independent Guinea-Bissau.

Mozambique Independence, 1962–1974*Case Outcome: COIN Loss**Fought against the tide of history (postcolonialism)*

Mozambique was one of three concurrent insurgencies that Portuguese colonial forces battled throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. In the first phase of this conflict, General António Augusto dos Santos prosecuted a low-intensity population-centric COIN campaign characterized by psychological warfare and limited operations. In Phase II, General Kaúlza de Arriaga switched course, taking a comprehensive approach that included development, resettlement, recruitment of indigenous troops, and an increase in airborne search-and-destroy operations in an attempt to win the war decisively and bring the con-

flict to a victorious end for the Portuguese. Despite a largely successful COIN campaign, the 1974 Carnation Revolution led Portugal to withdraw from its overseas colonies, leading to an insurgent victory and the ascension of the Mozambique Liberation Front.

Yemen, 1962–1970

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

An insurgency was launched in North Yemen after the country's ruling imam was overthrown in a coup by Egyptian-trained military officers in 1962. Seeking to restore the old order, the imam rallied tribal forces, with support from Saudi Arabia, to launch a guerrilla campaign against the new republican government, which maintained a weak hold on the country. Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser responded to the growing insurgent threat by providing an increasing level of military support to the Yemeni government. Initially supplying military advisers and special forces teams, Egypt sent 60,000 troops to Yemen by 1965 and became the primary COIN force. Despite their overwhelming land and air power, the Egyptian forces could not adequately defend against the imam's attacks or achieve popular support due to their brutal COIN tactics and modern socialist ideology that was antithetical to traditional Yemeni culture. Nasser briefly agreed to mediation efforts after experiencing heavy losses but subsequently recommitted a large contingent of Egyptian troops to Yemen as he sought to fill the strategic vacuum left by Great Britain's withdrawal from South Yemen. It was only after experiencing a humiliating defeat in the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War in 1967 that Nasser decided to withdraw from the country. The Yemeni conflict continued at a reduced pace after Egypt's withdrawal, finally ending two years later when new leaders emerged on both sides and agreed to establish a more moderate government that provided the imam's supporters with significant political autonomy.

Uruguay, 1963–1972

Case Outcome: COIN Win

A Marxist-Leninist urban insurgency perpetrated by the Tupamaros in Uruguay, this conflict was motivated by the rapid decline of the country's previously successful economy in the early 1960s. The innovative Tupamaros—who at first were masters at solidifying public support and turning the populace against the government—were easily able to overcome Uruguay's inept COIN force, which was composed of police and, later, paramilitary forces, during the first two phases of the conflict. However, the insurgents' increasingly aggressive and violent tactics in the later years of the war led to an increase in popular support for the COIN effort and aided in the supply of human intelligence to COIN forces. At the same time, the COIN effort was strengthened by the Uruguayan president's decision to order the army to take control of the conflict from the inadequately trained and understrength police force. The army rapidly prevailed over the Tupamaros once it became directly involved in the conflict, in part by initiating psychological operations (PSYOP) campaign to inform the populace of the threat posed by the insurgents. Ultimately, the army was so successful that it became a menace in its own right, dissolving the country's democratic parliament and imposing military rule in Uruguay immediately following its defeat of the insurgents. The military continued to rule the country for 12 years after the end of the conflict.

Oman (Dhofar Rebellion), 1965–1975

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The Dhofar rebellion began as a separatist movement by tribes seeking independence from the repressive rule of the reactionary Sultan Said ibn Taimur. After a Marxist government gained power in neighboring South Yemen, the insurgency adopted a communist ideology, and the conflict evolved into a regional war involving multiple external actors. Great Britain, Iran, and Jordan supported the sultan, while South Yemen, China, and the Soviet Union supported the “communist” insurgents. Despite extensive external support, the Omani military was unable to contain the rebellion due to the sultan's refusal to

modernize his forces or to provide even the most basic government services to his subjects. After the sultan's son, Sultan Qaboos, took power in a coup, the Omani forces and their British advisers adopted a more effective COIN strategy that combined conventional operations with civil development and political reform. Once Qaboos addressed the needs of his population, seized the military initiative, and reduced the insurgents' access to support and sanctuary, he was able to achieve a decisive victory.

Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, 1965–1980

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Fought against the tide of history (apartheid)

The Rhodesian conflict began when the British colony of Southern Rhodesia unilaterally declared its independence and asserted its right to maintain white-minority rule. This declaration prompted the country's two major black African nationalist parties, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), to launch a rural guerrilla insurgency to achieve political rights for the black majority. Initially, the guerrillas launched small-scale attacks against white settlers from bases in Zambia. The insurgency then expanded as ZANU and ZAPU established training and logistical bases along the eastern and western borders of the country and drew support from the local population in Rhodesia. The guerrillas were unable to gain the upper hand in the conflict, however, as the Rhodesian security forces adopted a series of innovative COIN tactics in road security, tracking, and reconnaissance and intelligence gathering that constrained the number of insurgent attacks and preserved military control over the country. It was only when political tensions became too great and external pressure weighed in against the government that Salisbury was willing offer concessions to the black majority and concede defeat.

Argentina, 1969–1979

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Initially a socialist insurgency aimed primarily at restoring the power of exiled president Juan Perón, the insurgency in Argentina evolved into revolt against the government of the reinstated Perón and eventually became much more focused on military goals in lieu of political aims. Throughout the conflict, the country's political system morphed from military government to an elected socialist government, before shifting back to a military regime with the ousting of Isabel Perón's administration in 1976. Through these transitions, the government's COIN strategy shifted from one of relative leniency focused on legal mechanisms to one that adopted increasingly illegal, brutal tactics, culminating in the indiscriminate "dirty war" waged against large swathes of Argentine society after 1976 that ultimately crushed the insurgency.

Cambodia, 1967–1975

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

As the conflict in neighboring Vietnam led North Vietnamese forces to make more and more use of logistics lines passing through Cambodia, and under U.S. pressure to join forces with the South Vietnamese, Cambodia's mercurial Prince Norodom Sihanouk walked a tightrope of pseudo-neutrality, allowing the North Vietnamese to operate unopposed in his country's hinterland but refusing to be drawn further into the war. This led to some peculiar situations. For example, Chinese materiel found its way from the North Vietnamese to both the Cambodian army (for the favor of port access) and the Cambodian communist rebels whom the Cambodian army had been fighting since an outbreak of leftist violence in 1967. Sihanouk's balancing act ended up alienating many key stakeholders both within and outside Cambodia and came to an end in 1970, when his government fell to a coup.

The new government declared war against the communists and joined the broader conflict on the side of the South Vietnamese and the United States, a move that dissolved the tenuous restraint previously shown by the North Vietnamese. North Vietnamese forces, when directly engaged by the Cambodians, cut them to ribbons in a series

of campaigns in 1970 and 1971. They also bolstered their forces with Cambodian communists whom they had sheltered in exile since 1955.

The year 1972 brought a cease-fire in Vietnam as a prelude to the communist victory there, and Vietnamese troops began to withdraw from Cambodia. Assuming them to be puppets of the Hanoi regime, many were surprised when the Cambodian communists continued to fight. Massive U.S. bombing in the first half of 1973 postponed a communist victory (and killed an inestimable number of innocent Cambodians), but U.S. congressional action stopped the bombing and ended all hope for the feeble and kleptocratic Cambodian government. The communists' slow advance toward victory ended in April 1975, when they captured the capital, ushering in the horror of the Pol Pot era.

Northern Ireland, 1969–1999

Case Outcome: COIN Win (Mixed, Favoring COIN)

The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) waged a three-decade-long insurgency against the British Army and various Protestant paramilitaries during a period widely referred to as “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland. Support for the PIRA by Northern Ireland’s Catholic minority, the Republic of Ireland, and the United States increased substantially following a clumsy and inchoate British COIN campaign in the first seven years of the conflict. In the late 1970s, the police assumed primacy over the army, and the COIN force focused on improving its intelligence capabilities. As a military stalemate settled in, efforts to transition away from violence and toward peace gained momentum on both sides. By the final phase of the conflict, both the Protestants and Catholics were war-weary. It was during this final phase that the insurgent leadership shifted the majority of its resources away from the PIRA and toward the organization’s political wing, Sinn Féin. In 1998, after 30 years of fighting, the insurgents agreed to lay down their arms and joined a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland’s parliament.

Jordan, 1970–1971

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The Palestinian insurgency in Jordan was strongly influenced by political forces in the Middle East in 1970. The conflict evolved after the Arab-Israeli Six-Day War, which led the Palestinian national liberation movement and its *fedayeen* militia to establish their headquarters in Jordan. As the *fedayeen* gained political and military power, they posed a challenge to the legitimacy of the Hashemite regime, leading King Hussein to initiate a COIN campaign culminating in a full military assault on Palestinian strongholds in Amman and northern Jordan. Ten days of intense fighting followed, during which the *fedayeen* received only limited reinforcement from neighboring Arab armies whose support they had counted on. As a result, the insurgency was nearly crushed. Leaders in the Arab world provided sufficient support to the Palestinian fighters to enable them to sustain a low-level insurgency for an additional ten months. However, overriding concerns over the political stability of their own regimes, and the region more generally, prevented them from providing the military support necessary to turn the tide of the war. In July 1971 the Jordanian regime succeeded in defeating the guerrillas and from expelling the *fedayeen* from the country.

Bangladesh, 1971

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The 1971 insurgency in Bangladesh was a separatist conflict launched in response to the Pakistani government's efforts to subjugate the Bengali people socially, economically, politically, and militarily. The impetus for the conflict was the overwhelming victory of an East Pakistani (Bengali) political party in the country's first general election, which spurred the West Pakistani leaders of the country to arrest the leader of the winning party and launch a military offensive throughout East Pakistan. The Bengali response, to declare Bangladesh an independent state and foment an insurgency, was met with overwhelming force, indiscriminate killing, torture, looting, the destruction of villages, and the mass, systematic rape of women and girls throughout the region.

With growing international attention being paid to the extent of the violence, India eventually launched a direct military intervention, bringing a decisive end to the conflict in two weeks. However, the COIN response to the insurgency was so brutal that it is widely considered to have constituted a genocide. In the nine short months of the conflict, an estimated 3 million were killed, 10 million fled to India as refugees, and 30 million were displaced within Bangladesh. Additionally, it is estimated that 200,000 women and girls were raped during the war.

Philippines (MNLF), 1971–1996

Case Outcome: COIN Win (Mixed, Favoring COIN)

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a Muslim separatist movement in the southern provinces of the Philippines, waged an on-and-off insurgency against the government of the Republic of the Philippines for approximately 15 years. Although its original aims included the establishment of an independent Muslim state in the province of Mindanao, it soon shifted its goals to the withdrawal of government troops from the southern Philippines, the return of lands taken from the Moros (Muslim Filipinos), increased autonomy, and the ability to implement Islamic law in Muslim-dominated areas. The government initially responded to MNLF activity with the imposition of martial law, and the Philippine armed forces engaged the insurgents in large-scale conventional battle in the conflict's first phase. This was followed by a series of cease-fires and negotiations—some more successful than others—and a shift on the part of the MNLF from conventional to guerrilla tactics. In the middle of the second phase of the conflict, a change in the political players involved brought a new COIN strategy focused on civilian population protection combined with offensive force and a continued willingness to negotiate. It was this change in strategy that eventually led to the COIN force's mixed success in this conflict.

Baluchistan, 1973–1978

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The 1973 conflict in Baluchistan was the fourth in a series of separatist insurgencies in the region since its incorporation into Pakistan in 1947. The Baluch People's Liberation Front (later, the Baluch Liberation Front) had widespread support from the Baluch people and employed standard guerrilla tactics to cut off major supply lines and transportation routes between Baluchistan and neighboring provinces. However, the insurgents were unable to prevail against the larger and better-equipped COIN force composed of Pakistan's army and a special forces unit, which successfully employed overwhelming force to crush the insurgency. Interestingly, the "crush them" concept worked somewhat more gradually and indirectly than in other cases, as the insurgents established bases in Afghanistan after the decisive period of the conflict and continued to wage a low-level insurgency across the border when possible. The basing of insurgents in Afghanistan did little more than prolong the conflict, however, which had essentially been decided before they moved across the border.

Angola (UNITA), 1975–2002

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Shortly after the end of Angola's war of independence, the country descended into bitter fighting as the victors against the Portuguese failed to agree on which group would rule the postcolonial government. The United States and South Africa supported Jonas Savimbi and his National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) insurgents against the Cuban- and Soviet-backed People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) COIN forces. This conflict was a classic Cold War proxy battle and a centerpiece of the Reagan Doctrine to contain and confront communism throughout the globe. By the end of the 1980s, as Soviet support for its proxies dried up, UNITA seemed to be in a position to overtake the MPLA. Instead of capitalizing on COIN force weakness, however, Savimbi ordered an internal purge of his organization, which included both his fighters and the Angolan population. In the final phase of the conflict, no longer the beneficiary

of U.S. or South African support, the insurgents turned to financing the conflict through diamond trafficking. The insurgency soon degenerated into criminality, and the COIN force finished off UNITA by killing Savimbi and bringing the conflict to a close.

Indonesia (East Timor), 1975–2000

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The conflict in East Timor began soon after Portugal ended its colonial rule and departed from the region, leaving a Marxist-leaning group, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN), as the strongest party in the Timorese independence movement. Indonesia responded to this potential communist threat by invading and annexing the region in July 1976. This conventional intervention by the Indonesian army devolved into a brutal COIN campaign over the next two decades that resulted in the deaths of as many as 200,000 civilians but failed to crush the insurgency. It was only in the mid-1990s that the course of the conflict changed, as FRETILIN adopted a more subversive urban strategy and drew greater international attention to its fight for independence. At the same time, the end of the Cold War left Indonesia without a clear rationale for its occupation of East Timor, and without the tacit support of the West. By 1999, Jakarta was ultimately forced to cede to international pressure and agree to grant sovereignty to East Timor, thus ending its COIN campaign in defeat.

Lebanese Civil War, 1975–1990

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

The Lebanese Civil War lasted from 1975 to 1990 and quickly led to the breakdown of government structures as Lebanon was engulfed by anarchy, earning the nickname the “militia republic.”⁵ The multidimensional nature of the conflict saw “several phases, each marked by complex shifting alliances and dozens of failed cease-fire agreements.”⁶

⁵ Michael C. Hudson, “Trying Again: Power Sharing in Post-Civil War Lebanon,” *International Negotiation*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1997, p. 112.

⁶ Hudson, 1997, p. 109.

In 15 years of fighting, the war included both large-scale massacres of civilians (the most notable of which was the infamous slaughter of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982) and vast numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees. Besides the myriad Lebanese actors involved in the civil war, regional rivalries between Syria and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), between the PLO and Israel, between Israel and Syria, and between Iran and Iraq all contributed to the chaos in Lebanon.⁷ Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the insurgency was the birth of Hizballah, a radical Shi'a militia, funded, trained, and equipped by Iran, which has grown into a considerable force in the Middle East. The Israelis continued to occupy southern Lebanon for a decade after the civil war officially ended, resulting in on-again, off-again fighting between Hizballah and the Israeli Defense Forces.

Western Sahara, 1975–1991

Case Outcome: COIN Win (Mixed, Favoring COIN)

The conflict in Western Sahara began in 1975 after Spain withdrew as a colonial power, allowing Morocco to occupy the region. Morocco's occupation was contested by the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario) movement, which launched an effective guerrilla campaign against the Moroccan army with external support from Algeria and Libya. By the mid-1980s, the Moroccan army was able to gain the upper hand against the Polisario by obtaining attracting military assistance from the United States and France and building more than 1,000 miles of defensive sand berms that cut the insurgents off from Saharan population centers and their sources of material support. A stalemate developed in 1988, with Morocco achieving the military advantage and the Polisario maintaining a diplomatic edge, as well as UN support for Western Sahara's right to self-determination. Yet, unlike in similar conflicts, the international community did not place sufficient pressure on the Moroccan government to agree to a political settlement. While a 1991 agreement call-

⁷ Hudson, 1997, p. 112.

ing for a referendum on independence effectively ended active fighting between the Polisario and Moroccan forces, the vote was repeatedly postponed, and diplomatic skirmishes continued, leaving the conflict largely unresolved for decades and the contested land in Morocco's possession.

Indonesia (Aceh), 1976–2005

Case Outcome: COIN Win (Mixed, Favoring COIN)

The Aceh conflict began as a limited insurgency triggered by the centralization policies of the Indonesian government and the imposition of petroleum rents in the mid-1970s. Over the course of three decades, the insurgency evolved into a broader conflict of ethnic separatism prompted largely by the human rights abuses perpetrated by Indonesian COIN forces. Only after the fall of Indonesian President Suharto's regime in 1998 did the separatist group known as the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) gain widespread public support. The Indonesian government offered the GAM limited political autonomy in an effort to reach a negotiated settlement to end the insurgency. When this effort failed, the government imposed a state of emergency and launched a large-scale military initiative against the GAM. These forceful actions left GAM forces severely weakened and reduced their base of popular support. Still, the insurgency dragged on until a natural disaster altered the course of the conflict. In December 2004, an earthquake and tsunami devastated the province and left both sides more willing to compromise and eager to conclude a peace agreement to secure relief from the international community. A peace agreement, signed in 2005, provided for expanded political autonomy for Aceh but fell short of delivering full independence to the region.

Mozambique (RENAMO), 1976–1995

Case Outcome: COIN Win (Mixed, Favoring COIN)

From 1976 to 1995, the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) waged a protracted campaign of violence against the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) in an insurgency that wracked the country and dragged in several outside actors, including Rhodesia,

South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Over a 17-year period, insurgent and state-sponsored violence contributed to more than 1 million casualties, resulted in massive refugee flows and internal population displacement, and paralyzed the country's economy.⁸ Even against a lackluster COIN force, the insurgents were never able to muster enough strength to overtake Maputo, the capital. The most intense period of fighting ended in October 1992, when both sides signed the Rome General Peace Accords. Shortly thereafter, FRELIMO won the country's elections, and RENAMO quit the fight. This set the stage for one of the most comprehensive reintegration programs ever conducted under the auspices of a UN peacekeeping operation.

Sri Lanka, 1976–2009

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Years of discrimination by the Sinhala majority against the Tamil minority boiled over in Sri Lanka during the Black July riots of 1983. Shortly thereafter, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) emerged as the most capable Tamil insurgent group, prepared to wage a campaign of violence and terror against the Sri Lankan state and non-Tamil civilians. Throughout its tenure, the LTTE was led by Velupillai Prabhakaran, a ruthless leader who continuously purged threats, both real and imagined, to his authoritarian rule. Over time, the LTTE distinguished itself as perhaps the most capable insurgent force in modern history. By the third phase of the conflict, the group boasted a navy, an air force, and an elite suicide commando unit used to assassinate several heads of state and numerous COIN force commanders. A transnational diaspora network provided funding and weaponry to sustain the Tigers for most of the group's existence, and a change from guerrilla to conventional fighting in the fifth and decisive phase of the insurgency doomed the LTTE. In the end, however, a combination of factors—including insurgent defections, a revamped Sri Lankan military, and displacement from the 2004 tsunami—allowed the COIN force to

⁸ Chris Alden, "The UN and Resolution of Conflict in Mozambique," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1, March 1995, p. 103.

triumph while employing brutal tactics in snuffing out the remnants of a once-powerful insurgency.

Nicaragua (Somoza), 1978–1979

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Four decades of neopatrimonial rule by a corrupt and unpopular government led to an uprising in the rural parts of Nicaragua that quickly spread from the countryside to the cities and towns surrounding the capital, Managua. The murder of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, an extremely popular newspaper editor, served to add fuel to an already smoldering fire as widespread dissatisfaction with the Somoza regime quickly galvanized into an insurgency.

Four important factors converged to allow the insurgents to dislodge a qualitatively and quantitatively superior COIN force. First, the three main insurgent groups reconciled their respective differences and combined their efforts to fight the government. Second, indiscriminate violence by the counterinsurgents turned the population toward the Sandinistas and swelled their ranks with recruits. Third, the Carter administration decided that it could no longer back Nicaraguan president Anastasio Somoza following egregious human rights violations committed by his forces. Finally, Venezuela, Cuba, and Panama afforded the insurgency the weapons and safe haven necessary to defeat a stronger opponent. The combination of effective political organization by the Sandinistas, repressive policies by the government, loss of support for Somoza in the United States, and a steady supply of weapons from various Latin American nations to the insurgents led to an insurgent victory in a short but bloody conflict.

Afghanistan (Anti-Soviet), 1978–1992

Outcome: COIN Loss

The Afghan insurgency against the Soviet Union has been referred to as a “textbook study of how a major power can fail to win a war against guerrillas.”⁹ Despite their overwhelming political and military supe-

⁹ Anthony James Joes, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical, Biographical, and Bibliographical Sourcebook*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996, p. 119.

riority, the Soviets encountered unexpected opposition to their invasion in 1979 and were unprepared to face the challenge of sustaining a weak, unpopular communist government against highly motivated Islamic fighters, or mujahadeen. While Moscow and its proxy regime in Kabul were able to develop more effective COIN policies in the mid-1980s, they were at a disadvantage against the mujahadeen, who not only benefited from extensive external support (including the provision of highly effective Stinger missiles from the United States) and religious fervor but were also in a position to “win by simply not losing.” The mujahadeen failed to unify as an insurgent force or offer an alternative form of governance, yet they were able to delegitimize the Kabul regime and defeat the Soviets after more than a decade of guerrilla war.

Kampuchea, 1978–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Fed up with the policies and cross-border incursions of Kampuchea’s Khmer Rouge government, Vietnam invaded Kampuchea in December 1978. Initially welcomed for freeing the people of Cambodia from the depredations of Pol Pot, the Vietnamese quickly wore out their welcome. With the support of Thailand (and others further abroad), the Khmer Rouge reconstituted itself as a significant insurgency, and several other insurgent movements formed and contested the occupation. The 1984–1985 dry season saw the Vietnamese and their Cambodian proxies aggressively sweep the border regions free of insurgents and then build a “bamboo curtain” (with cleared ground, minefields, and defensive road networks) with their K5 plan. This ambitious operation was effective over the short term, but the bamboo curtain did not keep the insurgents out, and the use of forced labor in its construction further alienated the population. After several years of expensive stalemate, Vietnamese forces abandoned Cambodia to their indigenous proxies in 1989. The puppet government managed to hang on through the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991 and into the UN peacekeeping mission period. It was then soundly defeated at the polls.

Although the government unambiguously lost this insurgency, it is scored as a mixed outcome for two reasons. First, the principal insurgent group, the Khmer Rouge, also “lost” in that it was not particu-

larly favored in the settlement or an important part of the postconflict governing coalition (other, more modestly sized and more moderate insurgent groups were). Second, although it withdrew and its puppet government was ultimately displaced, the government of Vietnam realized many of its more modest long-term political goals for Cambodia.

El Salvador, 1979–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Win (Mixed, Favoring COIN)

The Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) offered a significant challenge to a kleptocratic and dictatorial Salvadoran government and a corrupt, barracks-bound Salvadoran military whose only significant victories were against the civilian population. With time bought by massive amounts of U.S. aid during the 1980s, the government of El Salvador democratized and increased its legitimacy, while the military increased its competence and improved its respect for human rights. By the end of the conflict, real evidence of reform corresponded with government and military statements and helped generate and sustain credibility and legitimacy. The conflict reached a stalemate in the late 1980s and was ultimately resolved through a settlement favorable to the government as external support to the insurgents dwindled and participation in the political process became an increasingly tenable approach to redressing grievances.

Somalia, 1980–1991

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Mohamed Siad Barre's dictatorial regime was ousted by a decade-long insurgency that featured several insurgent groups fighting against the government. COIN forces repeatedly resorted to brutal tactics, which only served to galvanize the opposition and turn local populations against the military. Barre continuously underestimated the threat posed by the various insurgent factions while also failing to take heed of growing antigovernment sentiment among average Somalis. After years of wanton violence against civilians and any persons thought to be associated with certain tribes, Barre's government lost any support it

once had, and the population actively supported the various insurgent groups in their quest to overthrow the dictator.

As the insurgency progressed, the two main insurgent groups operating in the north, the Somali National Movement (SNM) and the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) began to capture territory throughout the country. Moreover, the SNM received material support from neighboring Ethiopia. Growing discord between Barre's regime and the military, coupled with a lack of a coherent COIN approach, contributed to his downfall. No longer able to bribe and coerce the myriad clans and tribes he had tactfully manipulated for so long, and facing a more organized and aggressive insurgency, Barre's forces eventually succumbed to defeat as he fled the country in the wake of his government's collapse. Somalia's clan- and tribal-based society was an ideal setting for guerrilla warfare, and the country has not had a functioning government since 1991.

Peru, 1980–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Win

Abimael Guzmán's Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path, proved to be a surprisingly resilient threat to democratic Peru. Arising in the midst of a significant economic crisis that corrupt and squabbling government officials did little to resolve, Sendero was first treated as a law-enforcement problem. The threat grew largely unabated until 1982, when states of emergency were declared in many of the country's departments, allowing the military to enter the conflict. Massive repression and indiscriminate violence did little to help the government's cause. The late 1980s saw shifts in government strategies, with reduced repression and new attempts to encourage development. These initiatives were marred, however, by corruption and lack of unity of effort. Though Sendero never had the support of most of the population (the group was too violent and too radical), government and military incompetence led to widespread belief that the insurgents would win. All this changed with the 1990 election of Alberto Fujimori to the presidency and his administration's commitment to local defense forces and an intelligence-focused strategy that ultimately led to the capture of Guzmán and the disintegration of Sendero. Under Fujimori, for the

first time in the conflict, the government, police, and military made effective use of what would now be called strategic communication, with a greater emphasis on government credibility and consistency between actions and messages.

Nicaragua (Contras), 1981–1990

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Various opposition groups came together to fight against the Sandinista government shortly after its victory over the Somoza regime in late 1979. This insurgency is heralded as a classic example of the Reagan Doctrine in action. Backed by the Central Intelligence Agency, Contra insurgents gained momentum early in the conflict by catching the Sandinistas by surprise. After regrouping and improving intelligence collection during the second phase of the insurgency, the Sandinistas regained the upper hand. Ultimately, however, the Contras emerged victorious as a result of better training and organization, as well as considerable pressure exerted on the Sandinista government by the United States. Militarily, the support provided by the United States in the form of training, weapons, and money allowed the Contras to avoid defeat just long enough for the political elements of the insurgency to work in their favor. Politically, the U.S.-backed candidate, Violeta Chamorro, benefited significantly from the nearly \$3 million spent by the National Endowment for Democracy on “technical assistance.”

Senegal, 1982–2002

Case Outcome: COIN Win

A separatist insurgency, the Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (MFDC), troubled the government of Senegal for two full decades. Early on, the group “capitalized upon the grievances of the local populations, and received support from them.”¹⁰ However, in the early 1990s, the insurgency began receiving external support from neighboring countries the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, which led it to

¹⁰ Wagane Faye, *The Casamance Separatism: From Independence Claim to Resource Logic*, thesis, Monterey, Calif.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2006, p. v.

escalate its tactics and turn on the local population. As the government of Senegal sought to improve relations with its neighbors in an effort to stem the flow of support for the insurgency, it also attempted to cut off any remaining internal support for the MFDC through what Wagane Faye has called a “politics of ‘charm.’” “In response, the MFDC [became] engaged in the illegal exploitation of [Senegal’s] natural resources.”¹¹ Ultimately, after dividing the insurgents through co-optation and amnesty, the government was able to settle with the majority of the insurgents, and the bandit activities of the remainder subsided to the level of a law-enforcement problem. At no point during this lengthy though relatively small and low-intensity insurgency was the government of Senegal ever seriously threatened.

Turkey (PKK), 1984–1999

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) began its insurgency as the outlawed party of an ethnic minority whose very existence was denied by the Turkish Constitution. The PKK struggled initially to develop support among a Kurdish population familiar with Turkish repression and not keen on further quixotic resistance. Over time, the PKK established itself as the premiere Kurdish cultural, political, and resistance organization and won significant regional popular support for its secessionist violence. This growth in support was a product not only of PKK successes but also of the repressive and heavy-handed response by Turkish authorities.

The PKK was defeated in 1999 after several years of “big stick” COIN by the Turks. Turkish forces had taken drastic measures to separate the insurgents from the population in the mountain villages in the area of conflict, aggressively pursued the insurgents into the mountains, sought to cut off cross-border support to them, and, most tellingly, made a political deal with extranational hosts to capture the authoritarian leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan.

¹¹ Faye, 2006, p. v.

Sudan (SPLA), 1984–2004

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The civil war in Sudan pitted the developed Arab Muslim government in the north against the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), representing Christians and animists in the rural, oil-rich south. The northern-based government sought to extend Islamic law throughout the country and benefit from the south's oil wealth, while the southern rebels fought to obtain autonomy. An ineffective COIN strategy motivated by religious convictions and a "military-first" approach hampered the Sudanese government's attempts to crush the insurgency. Despite factionalism within the SPLA and changes in its external sources of support, the insurgents were able to continue to launch attacks on government forces and Sudan's oil pipelines and infrastructure in the south. After two decades of fighting and widespread famine, the government bowed to significant international pressure and agreed to a negotiated settlement with the SPLA that included a power-sharing agreement with the south and the promise of a referendum on secession.

Uganda (ADF), 1986–2000

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) launched an insurgency against the Ugandan government in 1986, undertaking brutal attacks on civilians in the western region of the country. While a nominally Muslim group, the ADF did not have a clear religious agenda. Its vaguely stated goals were to overthrow the government and rid Uganda of Rwandan Tutsis. ADF attacks against civilians and military outposts increased in 1998, aided by external support from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan. Initially, the Ugandan government was unable to maintain security in the region, but it eventually contained the insurgency by attacking the ADF's rear bases in the DRC and by developing special COIN units trained in mountain warfare.

Papua New Guinea, 1988–1998

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The insurgency on the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea was sparked by protests by local landowners against the policies of outside mining companies. The protests became increasingly violent after the government sent in troops to defend the mines, leading to the evolution of a wider secessionist movement. Attempts by the Papua New Guinea army to crush the rebellion by employing local militia forces and instituting a military and economic blockade of the island failed. After six years of low-intensity conflict, the president of Papua New Guinea contracted with a private military firm to aid his COIN efforts. This decision led to the collapse of the government and a decline in public support for the military effort. The government then pursued political negotiations, leading to agreement on a cease-fire in 1998 that promised broad powers of self-governance for Bougainville.

Liberia, 1989–1997

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

What began as a civil war soon descended into a frenzy of violence, with as many as seven armed insurgent groups vying for power simultaneously. Under the command of Samuel Doe, the Liberian army and its ethnic Krahn counterparts attacked other tribes seen as threatening Doe's power, specifically those in Nimba County. In response, Charles Taylor organized a rebel force across the border in Côte d'Ivoire, where the insurgents organized, trained, and prepared for battle.

Soldiers from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), supplanted a deteriorating government as the primary COIN force. Atrocities were committed by all sides, including the COIN forces, as each side sought to gain control over valuable natural resources, such as diamonds, gold, iron ore, and timber. Accusations of brutality, collusion, and corruption, especially among the Nigerian contingent, plagued the COIN force throughout the conflict and certainly contributed to its dearth of credibility. With the civilian population suffering from war fatigue and the combatants themselves battle-weary, the fighting began

to ebb. After 13 failed attempts to reach a peace agreement, the conflict was finally terminated when Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia received the tacit approval of Nigeria to sit for elections. Receiving an overwhelming 75 percent of the vote, Taylor and his National Patriotic Party defeated the 12 other candidates contesting for power in an election marred by widespread voter intimidation.

Rwanda, 1990–1994

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The civil war in Rwanda began in 1990 when the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded the country from its base in Uganda, seeking to establish democracy and the right of return for Tutsi refugees. After the RPF was turned back by Rwandan and French forces, it conducted an effective guerrilla campaign that ultimately led to the negotiation of a power-sharing agreement with the Hutu-led government. The political agreement with the RPF raised fears among the Hutu population over a reassertion of Tutsi power, however. In 1994, tensions came to a head when the plane carrying the Rwandan president was shot down and a genocidal campaign was declared by the radical Hutus who gained control of the provisional government. Over the next few months, the government became preoccupied with eliminating Tutsis and moderate Hutus. French forces withheld direct military support, which allowed the RPF to regroup and quickly defeat the Rwandan army, gaining control of the capital with little opposition.

Moldova, 1990–1992

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

Situated at the ethnic crossroads of several former empires, Moldova was host to violence that pitted pro-Romanian ethnic Moldovans against pro-Russian Dniesters in the early 1990s.¹² Suspicious that ethnic Moldovans in the government were planning to unite Moldova with Romania following independence, various elements in the

¹² Moldova lies at the “ethnic crossroads” of greater Bessarabia, the intersection of German, Russian, Turkic, Romanian, and Ukrainian populations, history, and culture.

Transdniester region, along the Moldova-Ukraine border, agitated for attacks against the Moldovan police. COIN forces were woefully underequipped and lacked a full-spectrum force. Furthermore, they were incapable of conducting high-intensity tactical assaults, despite having air supremacy and artillery superiority. The insurgents, on the other hand, acquired arms and heavy weapons from the Russian 14th Army, which was stationed in the region and provided seemingly unending tangible support to its ethnic kin. The support of a professional military proved to be the decisive factor in this lopsided insurgency.

The Moldovan government tried relentlessly and to no avail to resolve the conflict through diplomacy, with the Moldovan leader Mircea Snegur unwilling to unleash the full fury of his COIN force against his enemies. The insurgents then defeated the COIN forces in a short but bloody battle with the assistance of the Russian 14th Army and various mercenaries. The Transdniester region retains *de facto* independence and is still under supervision by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Sierra Leone, 1991–2002

Case Outcome: COIN Win

The COIN force in this conflict comprised a series of actors and lasted for more than a decade. The insurgents terrorized the population through looting, rape, mutilation, and murder. Control of the diamond fields was a central focus of the conflict and served as the primary motivation for the insurgents. Money gained from the sale of diamonds was used to pay fighters and acquire sophisticated weaponry.

During one stage in the conflict, the government of Valentine Strasser and the National Provisional Ruling Council hired the South African mercenary firm Executive Outcomes to conduct COIN operations. Ultimately, British-led COIN forces adopted good COIN practices, quelled the fighting, and restored order to the country. Indeed, the lack of continuity between COIN forces—the Sierra Leonean army, Executive Outcomes, ECOMOG, and the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)—certainly contributed to the prolonged nature

of the insurgency. However, by reorganizing UNAMSIL into a more modern force with new leadership and better coordination at all levels, the COIN force was eventually able to adopt positive COIN practices in the later stages of the conflict. In addition to acquiring helicopter gunships, deploying a full signals battalion, and using detailed maps and satellite imagery, the COIN force was able to maintain regular contact for the first time between troop-contributing countries, the UN Security Council, and the secretariat through the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Furthermore, the COIN force kept its promise to protect the citizens during elections, providing the security necessary for Sierra Leoneans to vote at the polls with little fear of being attacked. Approximately 47,000 excombatants turned in their weapons, making the use of force by the counterinsurgents largely unnecessary during the final phase of the insurgency and lending a sense of credibility to the nearly disgraced UNAMSIL mission.

Some have called UNAMSIL the "model mission." To be sure, the COIN force was not without its shortcomings. However, at its height, UNAMSIL had roughly 17,000 troops and a large civilian staff operating at a cost of \$700 million per year. Although it was not recognized as such at the time, adherence to strategic communication principles was a major factor in the mission's success. Indeed, the COIN force was able to maintain credibility with the local population, achieve unity of effort, and keep consistency in its message. This was accomplished by coordinating a large-scale disarmament program, successfully organizing elections, and, above all, providing a secure environment for the population.¹³ These factors ultimately converged to allow the COIN force to prevail. In the 2002 elections, the government- and COIN force-backed President Tejan Kabbah won the election while the insurgent-supported Revolutionary United Front Party failed to win a single seat.

¹³ Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008, p. 111.

Algeria (GIA), 1992–2004*Case Outcome: COIN Win*

The insurgency by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) was prompted by the Algerian government's decision to cancel an election that was expected to put an Islamic party in power. The GIA initiated an urban terror campaign that became increasingly violent and targeted toward civilians. While the military government in Algiers took brutal repressive actions against the insurgency, the GIA's attacks were viewed as even more violent and threatening. After a series of civilian massacres, by 1998, the GIA had lost much of its public support. The government then pursued a more effective COIN strategy, implementing an amnesty program, targeting the GIA hardliners, and offering political concessions, which helped to defeat an already weakened and fragmented GIA.

Croatia, 1992–1995*Case Outcome: COIN Win*

The insurgency in Croatia was fought between the Croatian army (HV) and various elements of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and other Serb insurgent forces, which attempted to form their own independent enclave within Croatia known as the Republic of Serbian Krajina.

This three-year conflict saw innumerable failed cease-fires and egregious human rights violations committed by both sides. After two and a half years of on-again, off-again fighting, the government prevailed as a result of two overarching factors: First, the Croatian military completely revamped itself from a second-rate fighting force into a formidable army with the assistance of the United States. Second, and equally important, the insurgents were abandoned by Belgrade as Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic diverted his support elsewhere in the Balkans in an attempt to capitalize on insurgent success in neighboring Bosnia.

Following its transformation into a respected military, the HV was able to reduce tangible support to the insurgents and was strong enough to force the Serbs to fight as guerrillas. As a result, the government in Zagreb soon garnered the perception of a competent and

capable state. While the Croats fought valiantly throughout the conflict, it was not until the final phase that they were able to put all the pieces together, launching two devastating COIN operations (Flash and Storm in May and August 1995, respectively).

Despite employing many poor COIN practices, including severe repression, the Croats exhibited enough positive practices on balance to prevail and secure the country's independence with its capital in Zagreb.

Afghanistan (Post-Soviet), 1992–1996

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

After the fall of the Soviet-supported Najibullah regime in 1992, Afghanistan lacked a legitimate central government. Kabul was governed by a coalition of former mujahadeen who competed for power among themselves, leading the country to devolve into a state of warlordism. The Taliban rose to prominence in 1994 by establishing a devout and disciplined militia that promised to restore order and security to the country. Taliban leaders received support from Pakistan and the war-weary Afghan population and were able to defeat what remained of the divided mujahadeen government, seize control of Kabul, and establish their own unified yet brutal government.

Tajikistan, 1992–1997

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Less than a year after gaining independence from the Soviet Union, a mix of democrats, Tajik nationalists, and Islamists joined together to form the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) to challenge the communist-based government in Dushanbe. The UTO briefly gained control of the capital before being forced out by former government leaders, aided by Russian and Uzbek forces, employing brutal methods and inflicting significant civilian casualties. Upon its retreat, the UTO began launching attacks from bases in Afghanistan and became more closely associated with the Islamic movement.

The new government of Tajikistan subsequently did little to meet the needs of its populace and relied increasingly on Russian military

support. While Tajik leader Emomali Rahmonov bowed to pressure to make some changes to his government and military leadership, they were not sufficient for the rebels, who continued to launch attacks. Only after the Taliban gained control of Afghanistan did Russia and Uzbekistan force the Tajik government to make greater concessions. This outside pressure led to the signing of the Peace and National Reconciliation Accord that met most of the UTO's political demands.

Georgia/Abkhazia, 1992–1994

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Long a hotbed of unrest, the disputed Abkhaz region was one of many areas that erupted in violence following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Georgia/Abkhazia border region became host to an insurgency after the kidnapping of Georgian government officials in 1992. Control of the capital, Sukhumi, switched hands several times, and the two-year conflict featured numerous failed cease-fires. Abkhazian insurgents defeated Georgian COIN forces in a conflict characterized by atrocities on both sides, which fits the general pattern of insurgency warfare in the post-Soviet Transcaucasus. Volunteers from the Confederation of Peoples of the North Caucasus and Russian soldiers supplemented the insurgent force. The COIN force's inability to seal the country's borders allowed insurgent fighters, weapons, and materiel to prolong the conflict and provided the Abkhaz with the resources necessary to emerge victorious.

In addition to fighting Abkhaz insurgents, Georgian COIN forces were simultaneously engaged in a civil war against Georgian rebels and a war in South Ossetia. Ultimately, Russian soldiers tipped the balance in favor of the insurgents. Eager to end the fighting, Georgia begrudgingly accepted membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States as a precondition to Moscow's influence in bringing intra-Georgian fighting to a halt. Abkhazia gained de facto independence following the end of the insurgency and expelled the majority of the Georgian population living within its borders.

Nagorno-Karabakh, 1992–1994

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

In another case of post-Soviet separatism, Azerbaijani authorities had governed Nagorno-Karabakh¹⁴ directly with tacit approval from the Kremlin beginning in the late 1980s. When its Armenian majority declared the territory an independent state completely free from Azerbaijani rule, the two sides mobilized for war.

A more disciplined, better organized Karabakh Armenian insurgency defeated Azerbaijani COIN forces with the assistance of Russia, which provided weapons and troops to both sides in the conflict at various points. Political discord in Baku contributed significantly to the counterinsurgents' inability to muster an organized fighting force capable of defeating the insurgency. This case is a clear example of how ineffectual political leadership can adversely affect battlefield performance. Moreover, the Armenians possessed superior fighting skills from their experience in the former Soviet army. By the time the fighting came to an end, Armenian insurgents controlled not only Nagorno-Karabakh proper but also approximately 15 percent of Azerbaijani territory. Russia helped negotiate a cease-fire in May 1994, with a major stipulation being the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as a third party in the war. The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh remains unresolved today and is commonly referred to as a "frozen conflict" because of the inability to find a lasting resolution that is acceptable to all sides.

Bosnia, 1992–1995

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Following Bosnia's independence after the breakup of Yugoslavia, Bosnian Serb insurgents battled both Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats for control of territory. COIN forces were underequipped and frequently fought with each other, while the insurgents were more organized, highly motivated, and better equipped. "Arkan's Tigers" were an extremely brutal but highly effective paramilitary unit oper-

¹⁴ Sometimes referred to in the literature as Nagorny-Karabagh or simply Qarabagh.

ating throughout the country during the course of the insurgency. Bosnia was also the scene of the Srebrenica massacre, a campaign of ethnic cleansing orchestrated by Bosnian Serb insurgents that led to the deaths of more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslims and the exodus of an additional 25,000–30,000 refugees.

The Srebrenica massacre and another large-scale slaughter of civilians in Markale prompted the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to intervene to end the fighting in the waning stages of the conflict, but Bosnian Serb insurgents secured a significant portion of territory and established the autonomous Republika Srpska, with close ties to Belgrade. The insurgency officially ended with the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Paris on December 14, 1995.

Burundi, 1993–2003

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

Burundi has long been plagued by ethnic conflict between the Tutsi minority, which maintained control of the government, and the majority Hutu population. In 1993, a series of ethnic massacres occurred after the country's first democratically elected Hutu president was assassinated. Subsequent instability led the Tutsi-dominated army to reassert control and reinstall a Tutsi-led government under Pierre Buyoya. The Buyoya regime implemented harsh COIN tactics, including widespread forcible resettlements, which served to reduce popular support for the government. Only after a decade of fighting, tens of thousands of deaths, and hundreds of thousands of displacements was a peace agreement finally reached with the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD, one of the two major Hutu insurgent groups), in which the FDD agreed to abandon its armed struggle in exchange for guaranteed representation in the government.

Chechnya I, 1994–1996

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

After failing to put down a rebellion by proxy in the breakaway Republic of Chechnya, Russian forces entered Grozny in December 1994.

As the COIN force, the Russian army was plagued by a lack of training, severely disjointed command and control, and an unclear mission. Chechen insurgents, however, were highly motivated, familiar with the terrain, and able to marshal the resources necessary to exploit the Russians in asymmetric engagements.

The insurgents proved to be as adaptable and flexible as the COIN force was cumbersome. Realizing that hit-and-run tactics would require a high degree of mobility, the Chechens used light and portable grenade launchers, machine guns, and antitank weapons. The Chechens employed a technique known as “hugging,” in which they stayed close to the Russian infantry in urban areas (usually less than 50 meters) to reduce casualties from COIN artillery and air attacks. Furthermore, the insurgents had an extensive support network among the population, which provided them with real-time intelligence, food, weapons, and fuel. The conflict devolved into carnage with widespread atrocities committed by both sides before a Russian withdrawal in 1996.

Afghanistan (Taliban), 1996–2001

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

The Taliban took power from an unstable mujahadeen government in Kabul in 1996 and consolidated control over much of the country over the course of the next two years (with the help of Pakistani and foreign jihadist fighters). It failed, however, to establish an effective administrative apparatus that could provide services to the population or gain popular support for the regime. Welcomed at first for imposing order after years of chaos and bloodshed, the Taliban alienated many Afghans and isolated itself from the international community with its brutal imposition of Islamic law. Ultimately, the Taliban’s decision to host Osama bin Laden and allow him to establish al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan led the Taliban to be driven from power by a U.S.-led coalition in November 2001.

Zaire (anti-Mobutu), 1996–1997*Case Outcome: COIN Loss*

The eastern region of Zaire was destabilized by the civil war in neighboring Rwanda and the influx of Hutus across the border. The displaced Hutus threatened the native Tutsi population in Zaire and established a base for rebel attacks against the new Rwandan government. In response to this threat, local Tutsis and the Rwandan army launched a preemptive attack on the Hutu militia and the Zairian army that supported it. A national rebel group under the leadership of Laurent Kabila was then formed to lead the fight against Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko's regime. Kabila faced little resistance from Mobutu's poorly equipped army. Aided by the Rwandan, Ugandan, and Angolan armies, Kabila was able to take control of the capital within a matter of months.

Kosovo, 1996–1999*Case Outcome: COIN Loss*

Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) insurgents battled Federal Republic of Yugoslavia COIN forces to a stalemate for most of the duration of this conflict. The KLA received financial assistance from the Kosovar Albanian diaspora and also benefited from the implosion of the government in neighboring Albania, which resulted in significant amounts of weaponry flooding across the border into the hands of the KLA.

The Racak massacre carried out by COIN forces prompted NATO to intervene on the side of the insurgents in an attempt to prevent ethnic cleansing and defeat the Milosevic regime. NATO forces conducted a three-month air campaign while KLA insurgents fought Serbian troops on the ground, resulting in Milosevic's capitulation and the imposition of a UN-backed peacekeeping force. While various commentators speculate on the motives for Milosevic's concession of the war, the primary reason is unequivocal: NATO air power was *the* deciding factor in bringing the conflict to a close. Following its unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008 as the Republic of Kosovo, the country is recognized as an independent nation by 63 UN member states, including the United States.

Nepal, 1997–2006

Case Outcome: COIN Loss

A democracy since 1990, Nepal fell prey to problems common to nascent democracies: corruption, excessive interparty politicking, and general paralysis and ineffectiveness.¹⁵ This left the citizenry very open to the criticism offered by Maoist insurgents beginning in 1996. The insurgents' criticism of the state was further validated by the ineffective yet brutal COIN campaign launched by local police, which targeted both the insurgents and civilians. The one government institution with any kind of legitimacy, the monarchy, was shattered in a 2001 regicide. That same year, Nepal's army was unleashed on the insurgents for the first time and proved no more effective than the police had been. Largely a ceremonial force, though substantially better equipped than the police or insurgents, the army made no headway against the Maoists and could not provide security for itself let alone the larger population. King Gyanendra's 2005 royalist seizure of the government cast much of Nepali civil society into opposition. The Maoist insurgents opportunistically joined with a prodemocracy coalition and secured a significant place for themselves in the new government after the combination of military and civil pressure forced the king to capitulate in 2006.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (anti-Kabila), 1998–2003

Case Outcome: COIN Loss (Mixed, Favoring Insurgents)

The second Congolese war began in 1998 with the invasion of Rwandan and Ugandan forces seeking to overthrow DRC President Laurent Kabila, their former ally. Kabila countered the threat to his government by engaging Angolan, Zimbabwean, and Namibian forces and local militia groups in his defense. The war then devolved into a conflict of pillage and partition as the various regional forces battled for control of the country's resources. Efforts toward political compromise and international negotiation began in 2001 after the president was

¹⁵ Thomas A. Marks, *Insurgency in Nepal*, Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, December 2003, p. 4.

assassinated and replaced by his son, Joseph. Joseph Kabila eventually concluded a cease-fire agreement with the Ugandan, Rwandan, and other foreign forces and a power-sharing deal with the major rebel groups, which greatly reduced the level of fighting by 2003.

Case Narrative Results

These narratives provide some context for the quantitative analysis, presented in the next chapter. The accompanying volume provides more detail on the 41 new cases (see *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies* for the same material on the 30 cases previously studied), including

- a short summary of the case
- a summary of each phase of the case, including key factors for that phase
- a discussion of the conventional explanations for the outcomes of the case, as offered in existing secondary analysis
- a list of distinct features of the case.¹⁶

Beyond this, we offer no separate analysis of the individual cases; all of the analyses are of aggregate-level data across all of the cases together or across relevant subsets of cases. In fact, one of our most striking findings is that we do not need to discuss any of the distinct features or unique narrative peculiarities of the individual cases to wholly explain the outcomes: The patterns of presence or absence of factors common to all of the cases are sufficient to explain the outcomes (see Chapter Five). In fact, our analysis supports the idea that it can be a mistake to learn too many “lessons” from a single case, as the peculiarities and distinctions of a single case may obfuscate otherwise critical and enduring relationships between COIN practices and outcomes.

¹⁶ See Paul, Clarke, Grill, and Dunigan 2013; Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010a.

Considering the “Right” Cases: Identifying Relevant Subsamples

The goal of this research was to answer a range of questions about or related to the historical effectiveness of a variety of COIN concepts and associated practices. These are fundamentally *comparative* questions and are based on the assumption that the historical cases in which these different practices have been observed are comparable. Moreover, to make the results of such analyses of more than just historical interest, the historical cases must be comparable to likely future cases as well. This chapter argues that some of the 71 cases discussed in Chapter Two, while individually interesting, are *not* good comparisons with other historical cases and with likely future cases and thus should be excluded from comparative analysis. After identifying these suboptimal cases for comparative analysis and indicating which cases constitute the 59 core cases used for our core analysis, the chapter then turns to the identification of several subsets within the data—cases that are members of smaller populations of cases with shared features. These are the cases that followed each of the two main COIN paths (the cases involving “iron fist” COIN approaches and those pursuing motive-focused approaches) and cases involving an external actor committing forces on the COIN side. Those cases involving an external actor committing forces to support the COIN effort constitute a comparative group of particular interest to the U.S. Department of Defense, because the role of external actor in support of a COIN effort in another country is the most likely COIN-related role for U.S. forces in both the short- and long-term future.

Every Insurgency Is Unique . . . Or Is It?

One of the oft-repeated themes in the literature on COIN is that “every insurgency is unique” and, thus, every COIN campaign must be unique.¹ However, in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, we found that the distinctiveness of insurgencies did not matter across the 30 cases analyzed in that original study, in that a relatively modest list of factors was able to perfectly discriminate the cases into wins and losses without making any recourse to distinctive features or narratives of exceptionality. This led to the conclusion there that “every insurgency may be unique, but not at this level of analysis,” noting that distinct features of cases may make it harder or easier to do the things that must be done in order to prevail but that these things remained constant across the cases studied.² Note that while we find that effective concepts and successful practices are consistent through history, the detailed case narratives show that the difficulty of implementing the recommended practices varied *greatly* from case to case. At this level of analysis, we identify what a COIN force must accomplish if it hopes to prevail; we do not offer advice about exactly how to do those things in any given context, nor do we note how difficult it will be to do those things in any given context.

¹ Each of the following documents contains the quotation “every insurgency is unique”: Joe Felter, “Taking Guns to a Knife Fight: An Empirical Study of Effective Counterinsurgency,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, Pa., August 31, 2006; John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2005; Sergio M. Giampietri and John H. Stone, Sr., *A Counterinsurgency Study: An Analysis of Local Defenses*, Monterey, Calif.: Naval Postgraduate School, September 2004; Raymond A. Millen, *Afghanistan: Reconstituting a Collapsed State*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, April 2005; Michael A. Norton, *Operational Leadership in Vietnam: General William Depuy vs. Lieutenant General Victor Krulak or Attrition Vice Pacification*, Newport, R.I.: Naval War College, May 19, 1997; Frank G. Hoffman, “Neo-Classical Counterinsurgency?” *Parameters*, Summer 2007; J. D. Harrill, *Phased Insurgency Theory: Ramadi*, Quantico, Va.: U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 2008; and Colin S. Gray, “Irregular Warfare: One Nature, Many Characters,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Winter 2007. Also see Appendix C.

² Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010a, p. 88.

Eliminating Poor Comparisons and Getting to the 59 Core Cases

With the broader data set considered here relative to the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* research, we faced the possibility that cases would have such distinctive characteristics or narratives as to not be comparable with other cases. In fact, preliminary explorations of the case data revealed several instances in which the COIN force had followed many of the COIN practices endorsed in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* yet still managed to lose to the insurgents. The case narratives confirmed the validity of this observation but also revealed something else, something distinctive yet common to all of these peculiar cases: They were all “fought against the tide of history”—that is, against the trends of very strong global social and political forces. Specifically, they represented either the end of the colonial era or the end of apartheid. (Each case fought against the tide of history is so noted in the case summaries in Chapter Two.) What appeared at first to be something unique in each of several cases in fact turned out to be a whole category of exceptional cases. Rather than caveating every good COIN practice identified as “effective, except when fighting against the tide of history” throughout this report, we elected to exclude such cases from all core analyses.

We concluded that cases fought against the tide of history are apples to oranges with the typical COIN cases, the ones we wish to learn lessons from. To eliminate the unwelcome distinctiveness of otherwise “good” COIN practices failing to stem the tide of history, we added a factor to the factor list, “Case fought against the tide of history.” (See Appendix E for a full list of all factors and factor numbers.) Every case that was fought against the tide of history (either the end of colonialism or the end of apartheid) in its decisive phase was flagged for removal from the set of core cases. This made the most sense analytically and allowed for a more robust set of findings. The “tide of history” cases are listed in Table 3.1. Note that fighting against the tide of history is only surely observable as an *ex post facto* judgment. One is by no means guaranteed to be able to recognize fighting against the

Table 3.1
List of Cases Fought Against the Tide of History

Case	Date Span
UK in Palestine	1944–1947
Indochina	1946–1955
Kenya	1952–1956
Algerian Independence	1954–1962
Cyprus	1955–1959
Namibia	1960–1989
South Africa	1960–1990
Angolan Independence	1961–1974
Guinea-Bissau	1962–1974
Mozambique Independence	1962–1974
Zimbabwe/Rhodesia	1965–1980

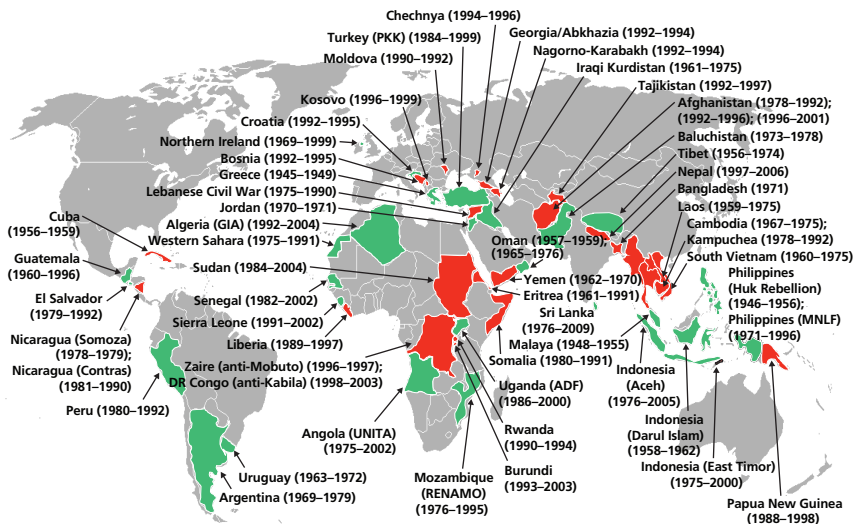
tide of history in the moment; it is only through repeated failures that such a tide is revealed.

The observant reader will notice that Kenya is included on the list and that Kenya was reported in the previous chapter as a COIN win. This might lead one to ask, “If you can win when fighting against the tide of history, then how strong is that tide, really?” Be reassured that, while the British did manage to suppress the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya, they also granted Kenya its independence just a few years later. The tide of history remains, appropriately, inexorable.

The even more astute reader may note that Malaya (1948–1955) is *not* listed as a tide of history case, though it clearly began as an anti-colonial insurgency. In fact, we did score the first phase of Malaya as fought against the tide of history, but the later phases (and, critically, the decisive phase) were not scored as such because the British had taken steps to transition power and authority to an indigenous government. Although they continued to help fight the insurgency in support of that new government, by the end of the conflict, the British no longer fought to retain colonial control.

With the class of cases fought against the tide of history flagged for removal from core analyses, we identified a single additional possibly distinctive case. In fact, it might well be argued that this last case of concern is also a member of a distinctive class that should be excluded from the analyses, though this argument might be weakened by the fact that there is but a single case in that class. The class in question denotes cases whose outcomes were so mixed, so close to the razor's edge of clarity on whether the outcome favored the insurgents or the government, that including it adds little information about what is or is not effective COIN practice. The case we ultimately decided belongs to this class (and, ultimately, excluded from the analysis) is La Violencia in Colombia (1948–1958). A detailed discussion of the grounds on which La Violencia was excluded can be found in Appendix A. This final exclusion left us with 59 cases, hereafter referred to as the 59 core cases, which formed the analytic foundation for the core analyses that follow. The 59 core cases are depicted in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1
Map of the 59 Core Cases



NOTE: Green shading indicates that the COIN force prevailed (or had the better of a mixed outcome), while red shading indicates that the outcome favored the insurgent (thus, a COIN loss).

Iron Fist and Motive-Focused Subpopulations

Within the 59 core cases, we further identified several subpopulations of particular comparative interest. In Chapter One, we identified two paths taken by the COIN forces in these historical cases. The first was the “iron fist” path, cases in which with the main efforts of the COIN forces were kinetic actions against an active insurgency. The second was the motive-focused path, in which the focus was on reducing the motives for supporting or participating in the insurgency—notably, sometimes with a substantial balance between motive focus and kinetic action against the insurgents. Seeing these two paths, and mindful of contemporary debate on COIN in which the merits of much more kinetic concepts are discussed, we wanted to identify cases representing each of these paths to see whether there were any differences in the correlates of success. Table 3.2 lists the 59 core cases and distinguishes them as either primarily motive-focused or primarily iron fist in the decisive phase of each case.

Table 3.2
Countries, Date Spans, and COIN Paths of the 59 Core Case Studies in the Decisive Phase of Each Case

Country (Insurgency)	Years	COIN Path	Outcome
Greece	1945–1949	Iron fist	COIN win
Philippines (Huk Rebellion)	1946–1956	Motive-focused	COIN win
Malaya	1948–1955	Motive-focused	COIN win
Cuba	1956–1959	Iron fist	COIN loss
Oman (Imamate Uprising)	1957–1959	Iron fist	COIN win
Indonesia (Darul Islam)	1958–1962	Motive-focused	COIN win
Tibet	1956–1974	Iron fist	COIN win
Guatemala	1960–1996	Iron fist	COIN win
Laos	1959–1975	Motive-focused	COIN loss
South Vietnam	1960–1975	Iron fist	COIN loss
Eritrea	1961–1991	Iron fist	COIN loss
Iraqi Kurdistan	1961–1975	Iron fist	COIN win
Yemen	1962–1970	Iron fist	COIN loss

Table 3.2—Continued

Country (Insurgency)	Years	COIN Path	Outcome
Uruguay	1963–1972	Iron fist	COIN win
Oman (Dhofar Rebellion)	1965–1975	Motive-focused	COIN win
Argentina	1969–1979	Iron fist	COIN win
Cambodia	1967–1975	Iron fist	COIN loss
Northern Ireland	1969–1999	Iron fist	COIN win
Jordan	1970–1971	Iron fist	COIN win
Bangladesh	1971	Iron fist	COIN loss
Philippines (MNLF)	1971–1996	Motive-focused	COIN win
Baluchistan	1973–1978	Iron fist	COIN win
Angola (UNITA)	1975–2002	Iron fist	COIN win
Indonesia (East Timor)	1975–2000	Iron fist	COIN loss
Lebanese Civil War	1975–1990	Iron fist	COIN loss
Western Sahara	1975–1991	Iron fist	COIN win
Indonesia (Aceh)	1976–2005	Iron fist	COIN win
Mozambique (RENAMO)	1976–1995	Iron fist	COIN win
Sri Lanka	1976–2009	Iron fist	COIN win
Nicaragua (Somoza)	1978–1979	Iron fist	COIN loss
Afghanistan (anti-Soviet)	1978–1992	Iron fist	COIN loss
Kampuchea	1978–1992	Motive-focused	COIN loss
El Salvador	1979–1992	Motive-focused	COIN win
Somalia	1980–1991	Iron fist	COIN loss
Peru	1980–1992	Motive-focused	COIN win
Nicaragua (Contras)	1981–1990	Iron fist	COIN loss
Senegal	1982–2002	Motive-focused	COIN win
Turkey (PKK)	1984–1999	Iron fist	COIN win
Sudan (SPLA)	1984–2004	Iron fist	COIN loss
Uganda (ADF)	1986–2000	Motive-focused	COIN win
Papua New Guinea	1988–1998	Motive-focused	COIN loss
Liberia	1989–1997	Iron fist	COIN loss
Rwanda	1990–1994	Iron fist	COIN loss
Moldova	1990–1992	Iron fist	COIN loss

Table 3.2—Continued

Country (Insurgency)	Years	COIN Path	Outcome
Sierra Leone	1991–2002	Motive-focused	COIN win
Algeria (GIA)	1992–2004	Motive-focused	COIN win
Croatia	1992–1995	Iron fist	COIN win
Afghanistan (post-Soviet)	1992–1996	Iron fist	COIN loss
Tajikistan	1992–1997	Motive-focused	COIN loss
Georgia/Abkhazia	1992–1994	Iron fist	COIN loss
Nagorno-Karabakh	1992–1994	Iron fist	COIN loss
Bosnia	1992–1995	Iron fist	COIN loss
Burundi	1993–2003	Iron fist	COIN loss
Chechnya I	1994–1996	Iron fist	COIN loss
Afghanistan (Taliban)	1996–2001	Iron fist	COIN loss
Zaire (anti-Mobutu)	1996–1997	Iron fist	COIN loss
Kosovo	1996–1999	Iron fist	COIN loss
Nepal	1997–2006	Iron fist	COIN loss
Democratic Republic of the Congo (anti-Kabila)	1998–2003	Iron fist	COIN loss

External COIN Actor Subpopulations

The other group of cases that we separated out as constituting one or more subpopulations were those with external supporters on the COIN side. We scored a number of factors related to external support for each phase of each case (see Appendix E). Because so many COIN forces received external support in the form of funding or matériel at some point during the case as to render the presence or absence of such support a meaningless distinction, we chose to focus on the commitment of military force by major powers. Further exploration of the cases revealed two distinct levels of external force commitment: (1) those that were restricted to advisers, special operations forces (SOF), and air power and (2) those that involved a substantial commitment of conventional ground forces, up to and including being the primary COIN force. These are not mutually exclusive categories,

nor are they meant to be; advisers or trainers, special operators, and air power commitments usually accompanied external commitments of significant conventional ground forces. A case was considered to involve external force contributions limited to advisers, SOF, and/or air power if such forces were present in any phase in the conflict and if in no phase did the external contribution include significant ground forces. A case was considered to involve external ground troops if in any phase an external actor provided significant ground combat forces. Table 3.3 lists the 28 cases (from the 59 core cases) that involved major powers as external force contributors and also indicates which were limited to advisers, SOF, and air power and which were full ground troop commitments.

Table 3.3
Countries, Date Spans, and Maximum Levels of Involvement for External Actor-Supported Counterinsurgencies

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Maximum Level of External Force Contribution to COIN	Outcome
Greece	1945–1949	Ground troops	COIN win
Philippines (Huk Rebellion)	1946–1956	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN win
Malaya	1948–1955	Ground troops	COIN win
Oman (Imamate Uprising)	1957–1959	Ground troops	COIN win
Tibet	1956–1974	Ground troops	COIN win
Guatemala	1960–1996	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN win
Laos	1959–1975	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN loss
South Vietnam	1960–1975	Ground troops	COIN loss
Eritrea	1961–1991	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN loss
Yemen	1962–1970	Ground troops	COIN loss
Oman (Dhofar Rebellion)	1965–1975	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN win
Cambodia	1967–1975	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN loss
Angola (UNITA)	1975–2002	Ground troops	COIN win

Table 3.3—Continued

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Maximum Level of External Force Contribution to COIN	Outcome
Lebanese Civil War	1975–1990	Ground troops	COIN loss
Western Sahara	1975–1991	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN win
Mozambique (RENAMO)	1976–1995	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN win
Sri Lanka	1976–2009	Ground troops	COIN win
Nicaragua (Somoza)	1978–1979	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN loss
Afghanistan (anti-Soviet)	1978–1992	Ground troops	COIN loss
Kampuchea	1978–1992	Ground troops	COIN loss
El Salvador	1979–1992	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN win
Liberia	1989–1997	Ground troops	COIN loss
Rwanda	1990–1994	Ground troops	COIN loss
Sierra Leone	1991–2002	Ground troops	COIN win
Croatia	1992–1995	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN win
Tajikistan	1992–1997	Ground troops	COIN loss
Nagorno-Karabakh	1992–1994	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN loss
Bosnia	1992–1995	Advisers, SOF, and/or air power	COIN loss

Some Preliminary Observations About the Subpopulations

In the full data, history favors the insurgents, and they won (or had the better of a mixed outcome) in 42 of 71 cases (roughly 60 percent of the time). Because of the number of cases and the mixed signals provided by the cases that were fought against the tide of history, no single factor or stack of factors representing a COIN concept (see the next chapter) perfectly discriminates all 71 cases into wins or losses. However, there are a few facts that cut across all the cases, regardless of

the various class exceptions. First, every winning COIN force was able to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas (or win the preponderance of conventional engagements) in the decisive phase (see Appendix E). Second, every winning COIN force was able to reduce at least three of ten factors related to the tangible support of the insurgents in the decisive phase (details in Chapter Four). Third, every government that did not have at least four commitment and motivation factors in the decisive phase, lost (again, details Chapter Four). Fourth, every COIN force that failed to adapt to adversary strategic or tactical changes in the decisive phase, lost. These results hold across all subpopulations, because they hold across all cases, even those that are generally poor comparisons for the reasons discussed earlier.

Turning to the subpopulations provides an even finer level of granularity. Just considering the win/loss ratio for cases in each subpopulation is revealing. Among the 59 core cases, the insurgents prevailed in 31 (53 percent). This is understandably lower than the full data set proportion, as the largest excluded class was cases fought against the tide of history, predominantly a losing proposition for the counterinsurgents.

Among the 44 iron fist cases, the insurgents prevailed in fully 27 of them (just over 61 percent). In the 15 motive-focused cases, on the other hand, only four were COIN losses (27 percent). This clearly shows, without any further analysis, that while both paths *can* lead to victory, in actual practice the motive-focused path leads to victory more often. The iron fist path leads to victory well less than two-fifths of the time, while the motive-focused path leads there solidly more than two-thirds of the time.

Considering the 28 cases that involved forces from a major external power intervening on behalf of the government, 14 (50 percent) were COIN losses. For those contemplating intervening to support a government, this is good news; the rate of failure for externally supported governments is slightly lower than the base rate in the 59 core cases (53 percent), demonstrating that, by itself, being an external actor does not automatically doom one's COIN campaign to failure. Looking at the rate in the two subclasses of external supporters, COIN forces that received only advisers, SOF, and/or air power lost six of

13 cases (46 percent), while those that received significant external ground forces lost eight of 15 cases (53 percent). Given the relatively small number of cases in these subpopulations, these are not significant differences. Again, good news for the would-be external supporter: The outcomes of cases involving external COIN supporters are determined by factors other than the presence of an external supporter!

With the class exemptions now identified for removal and the subpopulations of interest defined, the report now proceeds to the core analyses, seeking answers to all project questions first for the core data, the 59 core cases. The subpopulations receive more detailed treatment in Chapter Six.

Testing Concepts for Counterinsurgency

Insurgency is a complex subset of warfare. Current U.S. doctrine defines *insurgency* as “the organized use of subversion or violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority.”¹ Essentially, insurgency is an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control.

The mirror image of insurgency is counterinsurgency, a combination of offensive, defensive, and stability operations. The doctrinal definition of *counterinsurgency* is “comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances.”² As discussed in Chapter One, in this report we define counterinsurgency (COIN) as efforts undertaken by a government and its security forces (or the security forces of supporting partners or allies) to oppose an insurgency. COIN is the type of operation or the mission and does not presuppose the approach taken to oppose the insurgency.

Our review of the COIN literature covered everything from the classics to contemporary contributions from academics, practitioners, and military officers. Based on this broad review, we extrapolated 24 distinct concepts, partial concepts, or collections of practical advice

¹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1-02, Washington, D.C., November 8, 2010, as amended through November 15, 2012, p. 150.

² U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012, p. 71.

for COIN.³ This chapter tests these 24 concepts against the historical record of the 59 core cases identified in the previous chapter. We find strong empirical evidence supporting 17 of these concepts and strong evidence against one.

The 24 COIN concepts are listed in Table 4.1. A given COIN force’s strategy or approach will often involve several of these concepts in whole or in part; they are not mutually exclusive and can (and

Table 4.1
Twenty-Four Concepts for COIN Tested in This Research

Category	Concepts	
Classic COIN concepts	Development (classic “hearts and minds”)	Unity of effort
		Resettlement
	Pacification	Cost-benefit
	Legitimacy	Border control
	Reform	Initiative
	Redress	“Crush them”
	Democracy	Amnesty/rewards
Contemporary COIN concepts	Strategic communication	“Put a local face on it”
	Field Manual (FM) 3-24, <i>Counterinsurgency</i>	Cultural awareness
	Clear, hold, and build	Commitment and motivation
	“Beat cop”	Tangible support reduction
	“Boots on the ground”	Criticality of intelligence
		Flexibility and adaptability

³ Eighteen of the 24 concepts tested here were also tested against the most recent 30 cases in these data in previous research; see Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b. In that original research, what are here referred to as “concepts” were labeled “approaches.” The fact that many of the COIN concepts appear together in successful COIN campaigns (in fact, no successful COIN campaign implemented fewer than five of the tested concepts) led us to seek a term that was more stackable—that is, better implied the kind of combination, integration, and synthesis of different COIN advice into the overall COIN effort. Conventional English usage suggests that each COIN force adopts a single approach (which may, to be sure, change over time), composed from any number of different concepts. We have adopted this new convention throughout. For a discussion of updates and revisions to the factors representing the concepts tested in our earlier research, see the discussion in Appendix D.

should) be combined. To impose some order on the identified concepts, we have grouped them loosely into classic COIN concepts and contemporary COIN concepts. Many classic concepts are still prominently advocated in contemporary discourse, so the label “classic” is in no way intended to suggest that they are dated. Similarly, most of the contemporary concepts have classical roots. Within the broader classic and contemporary categories, concepts are arranged beginning with those that are more firmly aligned with population-centric COIN theory and progress to those more closely aligned with the enemy-centric view. We could have just as easily sorted for alignment on the two alternative dimensions we advocate in Chapter One, type of action (diminishing motives or direct kinetic diminution) and type of target (insurgent support or active insurgents), but because most of these concepts were designed and have been articulated in the literature according to the population-centric/enemy-centric paradigm, we chose this approach.

Representing the Concepts in the Data

As we reviewed and synthesized the concepts, we identified a set of core tenets for each (reported later in this chapter). Based on these tenets, we then identified sets of discrete, measurable factors to represent each concept and identified them as either present or absent in each case. Details of the process that we used to select and refine the factors, along with details of the process by which the factors were determined to be present or absent for each case, can be found in Appendix A, in the section “Factor Generation, Evaluation, and Scoring.”

Our previous research, as reported in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, followed the same process and evaluated many of the same concepts for the 30 insurgencies begun and completed between 1978 and 2008 (all 30 of which are included in the 59 core cases on which the current analysis is based). Details of differences between the concepts tested in that earlier research and the concepts tested here, as well as the few differences in results, can be found in Appendix D.

Analysis of the Relationships Between Case Factors and Case Outcomes

Preliminary analyses involved comparing the relationships between different factors and the case outcomes. This began with the assessment of simple 2x2 tables for each factor against each outcome. Table 4.2 is an example of such a table.

Table 4.2
Sample 2x2 Table: Perception of Security Created Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	Yes	0	14
	No	31	14

Table 4.2 divides the 59 core cases by their values on case outcome (either COIN loss or COIN win) and the perception of security created or maintained among the population in areas that the area of the conflict (either present or absent). Adding up all four cells in the table gives a sum of 59, the number of cases. The sum of the cells in the first column is 31, the total number of COIN losses; the sum of the second column is 28, the total number of COIN wins. Summing by row, we see that in 14 cases a perception of security was present, and in 45 cases it was absent. Table 4.2 shows a strong relationship between creating a perception of security and case outcome. In every case in which there was a perception of security during the decisive phase (14 cases), the COIN force won. Not all winning COIN forces succeeded in creating a perception of security, but all COIN forces that *did* succeed in creating a perception of security won.

Factor Stacks

Each concept is represented by between one and ten discrete factors. The factors are listed after the tenets for each concept later in this chapter. Because each concept is represented by more than one factor, we faced a challenging question: How many of the factors associated with a given concept for COIN must have been present in a case before the COIN force is considered to have implemented that concept? Rather than attempting to answer this question in an abstract or theory-based way, we let the data speak and sought the best empirical cut point for each concept.

For each COIN concept, we created a new factor that was the sum of all the factors tied to that concept and present in a given phase or case. We then chose a threshold value for that sum that maximized the number of COIN wins associated with the implementation of the concepts while minimizing the number of COIN losses. Here is a concrete example: Legitimacy of the use of force as a COIN concept is represented in the data by six discrete factors (listed later in this chapter in the section “Legitimacy”). For each case, we summed these six factors, creating a new variable, “sum of legitimacy of the use force factors.” The results are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3
Sum of Legitimacy of the Use of Force Factors Versus Case Outcome (empirical cut point in red)

	Case Outcome	
	COIN Loss	COIN Win
6	0	7
5	0	3
4	1	4
3	2	1
2	9	3
1	7	5
0	12	5

Sum of legitimacy of
the use of force factors

Here, the empirical cut point was identified to be at four or more. Having at least four legitimacy of the use of force factors captures 14 of the COIN wins and excludes all but one of the COIN losses. Thus, we created a single factor to represent legitimacy of the use of force in the analysis: “at least four legitimacy of the use of force factors,” which was evaluated as present or absent in each phase of each case, just like all the other factors in the analysis. We created a “factor stack” to represent each of the 24 concepts we tested. A more detailed discussion of factor stacks can be found in Appendix A in the section “Factor Stacks.”

Tests of Each Concept

In this section, we introduce and test each of the COIN concepts listed in Table 4.1. Each entry follows the following format: The concept is introduced and the core tenets of that concept as identified in the literature are presented as a bulleted list. This is followed by a list of the specific factors chosen to represent the concept in the analysis and measured as present or absent in each phase of each case. Next is a discussion of the threshold for the factor stack chosen to indicate the implementation of the concept and represent it as a single factor. A table shows the relationship between the concept and the outcome, and a summary assessment of the empirical support for the concept is levied. These assessments indicate whether the concept received strong support from the evidence in our analysis, minimal from the evidence, or strong evidence against. Strength of support is based on the ability of the concept (by way of its factor stack) to predict or discriminate between case outcomes when implemented. Concepts were considered to have strong support if the bivariate relationship between the concept’s factor stack and the outcome was very strong (i.e., using it and it alone is a very strong indicator of the outcome); minimal support if there was a limited correlation between the concept’s factor stack and the outcome; and strong evidence against it if the concept was implemented in a greater proportion of losses than wins.

Classic COIN Concepts

Development (Classic “Hearts and Minds”)

The “hearts and minds”⁴ COIN concept should perhaps more properly be called the “development” concept. Core tenets are as follows:

- Development leads to indigenous support.
- Those who have something worth fighting for will fight for it.
- Development leads to increased indigenous capacity.
- Development is painful; short-term handouts ease the pain of development.

While the phrase *hearts and minds* itself may have become a cliché, the ideas behind this concept still retain relevance. The central proposition is that development and modernity will give the population a positive stake in order and good governance and thus deprive insurgents of their support. The catch, of course, is that development and modernity can cause painful dislocations and disruptions in the old institutions of a traditional society.⁵ The solution, then, “is therefore to win the public’s support for the government by ameliorating some of the negative effects of development while speeding up the provision of modernity’s benefits.”⁶ Furthermore, this concept has suffered from the “chicken-and-egg” dilemma of what should come first, security or development. As evidenced by travails associated with recent COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, no clear-cut answer to this question has been realized.

This COIN concept prescribes increasing political rights, improving standards of living, and reducing corruption in the government

⁴ The phrase *hearts and minds* can be traced to Sir Gerald Templer, who used it to describe aspects of the British COIN campaign in Malaya (1948–1955). While called “hearts and minds” at its inception, there is very little in this approach that pertains to efforts to influence or woo the population in the way the phrase is often used in the contemporary era. Perhaps a better short moniker would be “give the population a stronger stake.”

⁵ This idea is articulated thoroughly in Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968.

⁶ Austin Long, *On “Other War”: Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-482-OSD, 2006, p. x.

while pursuing a path to development. The development concept follows popular support–based theory, positing that development leads to support, and support leads to positive COIN outcomes.⁷ Extra nuance comes in with the proposed relationships between development and indigenous capacity and the inclination to resist insurgents. It is also an unambiguously motive-focused concept, aiming not only to diminish motives for supporting the insurgents but also to increase motive for actively resisting the insurgents among the population.

The development concept is represented in our analysis by four factors. The threshold for a COIN force to receive credit for implementing this concept is having at least two of the following four factors present:

- Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict that was controlled or claimed by the COIN force.
- In the area of conflict, the COIN force was *not* perceived as worse than the insurgents.
- Planned reconstruction/development improvements were substantially above the historical baseline.
- Reconstruction/development met at least two of these criteria: based on popular demand, initiated mainly at the village level, used local labor/created local jobs, aimed at self-empowerment of the people, and was sustainable.

As Table 4.4 shows, the COIN force won whenever at least two of these four factors were present in the decisive phase. Since the COIN force won every time it implemented this concept, *development receives strong support in our analysis*.

⁷ Long, 2006, pp. 21–23; David C. Gompert, John Gordon IV, David R. Frelinger, Seth G. Jones, Martin C. Libicki, Edward O’Connell, Brooke Stearns Lawson, and Robert E. Hunter, *War by Other Means: Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency: RAND Counterinsurgency Study—Final Report*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-595/2-OSD, 2008, pp. 91–92.

Table 4.4
At Least Two Development Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least two development factors	Yes	0	13
	No	31	15

Pacification

Primarily thought of as a Vietnam War–era concept, *pacification* is a broad and fairly vague umbrella term for a handful of population-centric COIN concepts that focus on the local level.⁸ These concepts emphasize the simultaneous pursuit of development and security, beginning on a small scale then then expanding across geographic locales. Classic pacification relates to the “community policing” perspective that was developed domestically in the United States in the 1970s.⁹

The core tenets of pacification are as follows:

- “All politics is local.”¹⁰
- Engage in or enable community policing or beat-cop activities.¹¹
- Development and security need to go hand in hand; the pursuit of either on its own can be counterproductive.¹²

⁸ Long, 2006, p. 52.

⁹ Long, 2006, p. 53.

¹⁰ “All Politics Is Local” is the heading of the section on pacification in Long, 2006, p. 52; the quote is originally attributed to former Speaker of the House Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill, Jr.

¹¹ Long, 2006, p. 53. The phrase “beat-cop behaviors” can be found in David Kilcullen, “Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency,” *IO Sphere*, Summer 2006a, p. 29.

¹² Long, 2006, p. 53. This thinking seems to have been adopted by COIN experts and U.S. government departments. See David Kilcullen, “Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency,” pre-

Again, while often considered a concept of yesteryear, pacification has stood the test of time, bridging the gap between classic and contemporary. This can be directly attributed to its focus on the population as a key to effective COIN. The support of the population is again implicitly important, but here that support is won locally. A premium is placed on providing and maintaining security at the local community or village level and then expanding the area that is “pacified.” Though focused on the population, this concept implicitly balances efforts to reduce the population’s motives and opportunities to support the insurgents, and of course the emphasis on local security includes an element of kinetic action against active insurgents.

Pacification is represented by six factors in our analysis:

- A perception of security was created or maintained among populations in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.
- Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict that was controlled or claimed by the COIN force.
- The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas.
- Planned reconstruction/development improvements were substantially above the historical baseline.
- COIN force undertook all three of clear, hold, and build.
- Reconstruction/development met at least two of these criteria: based on popular demand, initiated mainly at the village level, used local labor/created local jobs, aimed at self-empowerment of the people, and was sustainable.

The empirical cut point for the factor stack requires that at least two of these factors be present for the COIN force to qualify as having employed pacification.

Pacification receives strong support from these data. Every COIN force that realized at least two of these six factors won. (See Table 4.5.)

sentation, U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Conference, Washington, D.C., September 28, 2006b. This theme has also been commandeered by the U.S. Department of State, as evidenced in a report released in October 2007 titled *Counterinsurgency for U.S. Government Policymakers: A Work in Progress*.

Table 4.5
At Least Two Pacification Factors Present Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least two pacification factors	Yes	0	18
	No	31	10

Legitimacy

Sociologist Max Weber wrote extensively on the societal importance of legitimacy and authority.¹³ Legitimacy is fundamentally a motive-focused concept. The core tenets are as follows:

- Insurgency is fundamentally a contest of legitimacy.¹⁴
- A legitimate government:
 - has a monopoly on the use of violence¹⁵
 - maintains the rule of law¹⁶
 - is a provider of basic services.¹⁷

¹³ Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 78.

¹⁴ Eliot Cohen, Conrad Crane, Jan Horvath, and John Nagl, "Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency," *Military Review*, March–April 2006, p. 49.

¹⁵ Max Weber defined the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" (Weber, 1958, p. 78).

¹⁶ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2007, p. 154.

¹⁷ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2007, p. 153.

- The government's role can be expanded to include the need to protect legitimacy by avoiding collateral damage.¹⁸

This position asserts that people offer their support to the side that they perceive as having the greatest legitimacy. If made to appear illegitimate, the insurgency will lose support and supporters and will wither away. If legitimacy accrues to the government, then the government will enjoy greater support, greater patience for its shortcomings, and better intelligence on insurgents. Consequently, if the government is seen as corrupt, self-serving, and inept, the population may be persuaded to support the insurgents, who, even if somewhat draconian in their rule, are perceived to be more just and fair than the government.

Perceptions of legitimacy are complicated and involve contextual nuances. Legitimacy should always be evaluated as a perception of the stakeholders, not against some arbitrary external standard.

Because so many different aspects of and behaviors by the government and the COIN force can affect perceptions of legitimacy in a way that could relate to COIN outcomes, we divide legitimacy into “government legitimacy” and “legitimacy of force” for our analysis.

Government Legitimacy

Government legitimacy was represented by these two factors:

- Government leaders were selected in a manner considered just and fair by the majority of the population in the area of conflict.
- The majority of citizens viewed the government as legitimate in the area of conflict.

Having either factor was an empirical threshold. Twenty-three cases had at least one of the government legitimacy factors, and 17 of them were COIN wins; 36 cases lacked either of the legitimacy of government factors, and the vast majority (25, or 69 percent) were COIN

¹⁸ Montgomery McFate, and Andrea V. Jackson, “The Object Beyond War: Counterinsurgency and the Four Tools of Political Competition,” *Military Review*, January–February 2006, pp. 14–16.

losses. This degree of correlation is *evidence in support of the importance of government legitimacy*. (See Table 4.6.)

Table 4.6
At Least One Government Legitimacy Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least one government legitimacy factors	Yes	6	17
	No	25	11

Legitimate Use of Force

Six factors represent the legitimacy of the COIN force's use of force:

- The COIN force *avoided* excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force.
- COIN force collateral damage was *not* perceived by the population in the area of conflict as worse than the insurgents'.
- In the area of conflict, the COIN force was *not* perceived as worse than the insurgents.
- The perception of security was created or maintained among populations in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.
- COIN force did *not* employ the indiscriminate force.
- The COIN force did *not* employ practices considered beyond the pale by contemporary U.S. ethical standards.

The empirical break point for legitimate use of force was four of the six factors, a relatively high threshold. Of the 14 cases with at least four legitimate use of force factors, 13 were COIN wins. This is *strong evidence in support of the importance of government legitimacy*. (See Table 4.7.)

Table 4.7
At Least Four Legitimate Use of Force Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four legitimate use of force factors	Yes	1	13
	No	30	15

Reform

If an insurgency draws support from those frustrated with the performance of the government, improving government performance is a logical way to reduce that support. Similarly, if the way security forces deal with insurgents further alienates the population, such efforts can be counterproductive. Reform, of both the government and the security forces, is a motive-focused concept that can increase the legitimacy of the state and undermine support for insurgents as a better alternative. The core tenets are as follows:

- Government reform portrays the government as responsive and responsible, and changes leading to greater professionalism and good governance increase legitimacy.¹⁹
- Reducing corruption is critical to earning the trust of the population and can function as a force multiplier, particularly in COIN.²⁰

¹⁹ Daniel L. Byman, “Friends Like These: Counterinsurgency and the War on Terror,” *International Security*, Vol. 31, No. 2, Fall 2006; see also John A. Lynn, “Patterns of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” *Military Review*, July–August 2005, and Carter Malkasian, “The Role of Perceptions and Political Reform in Counterinsurgency: The Case of Western Iraq, 2004–2005,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2006.

²⁰ George K. Tanham and Dennis J. Duncanson, “Some Dilemmas of Counterinsurgency,” *Foreign Affairs*, October 1969.

Reform was represented in the analysis by the following five factors:

- Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since the onset of the conflict.
- There were significant government reforms since the onset of conflict.
- There were significant ethical/professional/human rights–related military reforms since the onset of conflict.
- There were significant government or military reforms in this phase.
- Reforms were recognized/appreciated by the population in the area of conflict.

The best empirical cutpoint for these five factors proved to be at least four of the five. The government won 11 of the 12 cases that had four or five of these five factors in the decisive phase. This provides *strong evidence in support of reform as an effective COIN concept*. (See Table 4.8.)

Table 4.8
At Least Four Reform Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four reform factors	Yes	1	11
	No	30	17

Redress

If insurgencies are initially motivated by a set of grievances, and continued grievances sustain support for insurgencies, then redress of those grievances should lead to reconciliation and peace. Like reform, redress is related to legitimacy and, as such, is a motive-focused concept. The core tenet is as follows:

- The redress of grievances addresses the root causes of the conflict and increases the legitimacy of the host-nation government.²¹

Redress of grievances was represented in the analysis by three factors:

- Grievances leading to the initial insurgency substantially resolved.
- Insurgents’ grievances substantially addressed since the onset of the conflict.
- COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents.

These three factors did not yield an empirical cut point, because there was very limited correlation between these factors and outcome. Table 4.9 presents the sum of redress factors versus outcome, showing both the lack of a clear empirical cut point and the lack of substantial correlation. This means that *there is minimal support for redress as a COIN concept*.

Table 4.9
Sum of Redress Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Sum of redress factors	3	4	4
	2	4	8
	1	6	7
	0	17	9

Initially, this result seems somewhat surprising; after all, if insurgencies really are about grievances, one would expect the redress of those grievances to be more strongly correlated with success. Reflection, however, reminded us of the work of scholar Charles Tilly. In

²¹ See, for example, Thomas A. Marks, “Ideology of Insurgency: New Ethnic Focus or Old Cold War Distractions?” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2004, and Patrick M. Regan and Daniel Norton, “Greed, Grievance, and Mobilization in Civil Wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 49, No. 3, June 2005.

his seminal 1978 *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Tilly cited several important prerequisites to mobilizing effective collective action. He notes the presence of grievances but dismisses them as an important variable, finding that grievances are pretty much always present; variation in successful mobilization depends on other things.²² If, as Tilly states, grievances are always present, it is, in fact, not surprising that redressing grievances is not strongly correlated with COIN success. It is certainly likely that mobilized insurgents and their supporters would remain mobilized and simply claim other grievances or continue to claim the resolved grievances.

Democracy

Democracy is advocated as a way to increase the legitimacy of a government and as a way to resolve grievances short of violence. The core tenets of this concept are as follows:²³

- Democratic voice and expression resolve grievances.
- Democracy equals legitimacy.

At its undertheorized worst, democracy is held to be a panacea.²⁴ More reasonable articulations posit that democracy and democratization help resolve grievances through democratic expression, or they equate democracy with legitimacy.

Democracy is represented by four factors, the first two of which are mutually exclusive (so no more than three of the four factors could be present in any one case):

- The government is a functional democracy.

²² Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1978.

²³ Though certainly not the only example of this kind of thinking, both tenets can be found in Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Policy Coordinating Committee, *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication*, Washington, D.C., June 2007, p. 3.

²⁴ The word democracy or democratic appears 44 times in the 60-page 2010 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. The strategy has an entire section dedicated to the establishment and promotion of democracy, titled “Promote Democracy and Human Rights Abroad.”

- The government is a partial or transitional democracy.
- Free and fair elections were held.
- The government respects human rights and allows a free press.

The empirical cut point is having at least one of these four factors. As Table 4.10 reveals, 31 cases had at least one democracy factor in the decisive phase, with 21 of them being COIN wins. This is a positive correlation but a much weaker correlation than that observed for many other concepts, and, thus, we find *minimal support for democracy as a concept for COIN*.

Table 4.10
At Least One Democracy Factor Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least one democracy factor	Yes	10	21
	No	21	7

Unity of Effort

As a COIN concept, unity of effort draws on the classic military imperative, positing that successful COIN forces coordinate the efforts of all security forces, and the government more broadly, toward a unified purpose. Achieving unity of effort is often difficult in COIN, especially when balancing between sometimes-competing actions related to diminishing motive and eliminating the insurgent threat. The core tenet is as follows:

- When COIN forces are able to maintain unity of effort, it drives the core common goals and stated purpose/objectives of the mission.²⁵

²⁵ Robert M. Cassidy, “Back to the Streets Without Joy: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam and Other Small Wars,” *Parameters*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Summer 2004; Max G.

Unity of effort was represented by a single factor:

- Unity of effort/unity of command was maintained.

When unity of effort was maintained, the COIN force won in 24 out of 29 cases; when it was not, the COIN force lost in 26 out of 30 cases. (See Table 4.11.) This constitutes *support for unity of effort*.

Table 4.11
Unity of Effort Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Unity of effort maintained	Yes	5	24
	No	26	4

Resettlement (“Drain the Swamp”)

Pacification also has been used occasionally throughout history as a euphemism for relocation and resettlement—actions that take the prescription to separate the population from the insurgents quite literally.²⁶ This concept has also been referred to as “draining the swamp”²⁷

Manwaring and John T. Fishel, “Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency: Toward a New Analytical Approach,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1992; Jeffrey Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win*, Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2009.

²⁶ Kelly M. Greenhill, “Draining the Sea, or Feeding the Fire? The Use of Population Relocation in Counterinsurgency Operations,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Ill., September 2, 2004.

²⁷ This phrase is often attributed to former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in remarks made shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001. See “Rumsfeld: U.S. Must Drain the Swamp,” CNN, September 19, 2001. It is also a common phrase for the strategy of separating insurgents from the population, often used by the British in past COIN campaigns. For more information, see Wade Markel, “Draining the Swamp: The British Strategy

or “draining the sea,”²⁸ harkening back to Mao’s quote about the population being the sea in which the insurgents swim. Though focused on the population, this is not necessarily a motive-focused concept. It is founded in action based on opportunity: Rather than getting the population to stop wanting to support the insurgents, relocation is intended to constrain its ability to do so. This places the concept in the upper right quadrant of Figure 1.1 in Chapter One, primarily targeting insurgent support through physical means.

This version of draining the swamp has two tenets:

- The population is the sea in which the fish of insurgency swim.²⁹
- Separate the insurgents from the population (physically, in this case).³⁰

If the COIN force is unable to provide security to the population where it is and insurgents are extracting necessary inputs from that population, relocation of that population might seem to be an obvious solution. According to Kelly Greenhill’s research, the historical record for this form of pacification is extremely poor.³¹ Citing examples in Turkey, Burundi, Indonesia, and Colombia, Greenhill finds that relocation is likely to work only “in those rare cases where promises made by the counterinsurgents actually are fulfilled and the quality of life actually is improved for the displaced population—i.e., where a culture

of Population Control,” *Parameters*, Spring 2006, and Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 180.

²⁸ Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, “‘Draining the Sea’: Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare,” *International Organization*, Vol. 58, No. 2, Spring 2004.

²⁹ Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Samuel B. Griffith II, trans., New York: Praeger, 1961.

³⁰ Greenhill, 2004.

³¹ Greenhill, 2004.

of cooperation and co-optation can be inculcated.”³² The oft-invoked example of success in this concept is the British in Malaya.³³

Alternatively, resettlement could be both a kinetic action and a motive-focused concept (and thus fall into both the upper right and upper left quadrants of Figure 1.1). Under this construction, removing the population prevents the insurgents from coercively drawing support out of that population; supporting the quality of life of the relocated population diminishes any willing motive for offering further support. The focus is on denying the adversary the support of the population. If the population cannot be secured in place (as the generic version of pacification obviously prefers), then it must be removed to a location where it can.

The resettlement concept is represented by a two factors in our analysis:

- The COIN force resettled or removed civilian populations for population control.
- Relocated populations were sufficiently compensated, and their quality of life improved.

When both resettlement factors were present, success followed. (See Table 4.12.) However, the presence of both factors was rare, occurring in only three of 59 cases. Much more common was resettlement for population control without much attention to the care of the resettled. When the first factor occurred without the second (as shown in Table 4.13), the COIN force lost in five of the 13 cases. Taken together, this constitutes *minimal support for resettlement as a COIN concept*.

³² Greenhill, 2004, p. 3.

³³ John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2005; Thomas E. Willis II, “Lessons from the Past: Successful British Counterinsurgency Operations in Malaya 1948–1960,” *Infantry Magazine*, July–August 2005; Kalev I. Sepp, “Best Practices in Counterinsurgency,” *Military Review*, May–June 2005.

Table 4.12
Resettlement and Care for the Resettled Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Resettlement and care for the resettled	Yes	0	3
	No	31	25

Table 4.13
Resettlement Alone Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Resettlement alone	Yes	5	8
	No	26	20

Cost-Benefit

During the Vietnam War era and writing in opposition to those who advocated popular support-based concepts for COIN, RAND’s Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., focused instead on insurgents’ needs for certain inputs.³⁴ This insurgent-focused concept has the following tenets:³⁵

- Treat the insurgency as a system.
- COIN forces must increase the cost of insurgent inputs.

³⁴ Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, R-462-ARPA, 1970.

³⁵ Also referred to as “carrots and sticks.” These tenets are found in Long, 2006, pp. 24–26.

- COIN forces must interrupt the process by which inputs are converted into activities.
- COIN forces must destroy insurgent outputs.
- COIN forces should seek to blunt the impact of insurgent outputs.

Leites and Wolf suggested that insurgencies are best viewed as systems and that COIN efforts should be evaluated in terms of how well they either raised the cost of inputs to the system or interfered with outputs.³⁶ This concept came to be known as “cost-benefit” and indicated that, under certain circumstances, “development” could lead to increased inputs for insurgents:

In effect, development made more resources available to citizens, which insurgents could then acquire from the population through persuasion, coercion, or a combination of the two. Thus, paradoxically, programs designed to reduce popular support for insurgents could actually reduce the insurgent cost for inputs such as food.³⁷

The concept relies on system dynamics theory to posit that disrupting the input or output of an insurgent system will result in a reduction of the overall impact of insurgent output.

The core elements of a cost-benefit concept are captured in six factors in this analysis:

- COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgent processes.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent financing.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent command and control.

³⁶ Long, 2006, p. 25.

³⁷ Long, 2006, p. 25.

Having at least two of these six factors is the empirical cut point used as the threshold for the factor stack to represent the cost-benefit concept. There is a very strong correlation between the application of the cost-benefit concept and outcome, with 25 of 26 cases with at least two cost-benefit factors being COIN wins, and only three COIN wins coming without at least two of these factors. (See Table 4.14.) *This constitutes strong evidence in favor of cost-benefit.*

Table 4.14
At Least Two Cost-Benefit Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least two cost-benefit factors	Yes	1	25
	No	30	3

Border Control

The importance of border security follows the logic of the cost-benefit concept: If the insurgent “system” is able to freely receive inputs from cross-border sources, efforts to restrict in-country insurgent inputs will be far less consequential. “Indeed, with few exceptions (perhaps most notably Cuba), successful insurgencies have been able to obtain aid and comfort from outside sources.”³⁸ This is a concept targeting insurgent support, but through kinetic/physical means. Tenets include the following:³⁹

- Insurgencies benefit from cross-border support and havens.

³⁸ Long, 2006, p. 49.

³⁹ Long, 2006, pp. 49–51; Gompert et al., 2008, p. 190. See also Paul Staniland, “Defeating Transnational Insurgencies: The Best Offense Is a Good Fence,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Winter 2005–2006, and Alexander Alderson, “Iraq and Its Borders: The Role of Barriers in Counter-Insurgency,” *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 153, No. 2, April 2008, p. 19.

- Securing the border reduces the flow of fighters and materiel and/or provides useful intelligence.
- Secure borders increase international legitimacy.

The importance of border security is clearly evident in contemporary Afghanistan, where the Taliban has been able to move fighters, money, and materiel back and forth between that country and neighboring Pakistan. Although remotely piloted drones patrol the skies above the Federally Administered Tribal Areas on the Pakistani side of the border, the rugged terrain and centuries-old smuggling routes make sealing the border virtually impossible.

As a COIN concept, border control is always connected to other concepts, such as cost-benefit (deprive the insurgents of cross-border inputs), tangible support reduction, and legitimacy.

Border control is represented in the analysis by a single factor:

- The flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent.

Table 4.15 reveals a very strong correlation between border control and COIN success, with the vast majority of COIN wins (25 of 28) including border control in the decisive phase, while very few (four) of the COIN losses did. *This is strong evidence in support of border control as a COIN concept.*

Table 4.15
Border Control Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained largely absent	Yes	4	25
	No	27	3

Initiative

Seizing the initiative is a timeless military imperative predicated on striking fast, striking first, and striking hard. We discerned a single core tenet:

- Seizing and maintaining the initiative puts the COIN force in position to beat the insurgents back and gain the upper hand in a given phase.⁴⁰

This concept is represented in the analysis by a single factor:

- Fighting in phase initiated primarily by COIN forces.

In the majority of cases won by the government (22 of 28), the COIN force held the initiative in the decisive phase. However, in cases won by the insurgents, the COIN force also held the initiative almost one-third of the time (ten of 31; see Table 4.16). When we interrogated the case narratives looking for an explanation, one offered itself: the difference between seizing the initiative by blindly striking first and seizing the initiative by coupling flexible and dynamic capabilities with actionable intelligence. Looking more closely at the theoretical literature, several scholars assert that successfully seizing and maintaining the initiative depends in large part on actionable intelligence.⁴¹ Indeed, in Chechnya, Russian forces seized the initiative by conducting an all-out attack on Grozny, the Chechen capital. However, the insurgents were lying in wait, prepared to ambush the cumbersome COIN advance. Russian tanks were trapped in the narrow streets as Chechen snipers picked off retreating soldiers as they fled. On the opposite side of the spectrum, British COIN forces in Northern Ireland seized the initiative in Operation Motorman in 1972, a comprehensive sweep

⁴⁰ Robert R. Tomes, "Relearning Counterinsurgency Warfare," *Parameters*, Vol. 34, No. 1, Spring 2004. See also Ted L. Stokes, *Creating Time and Space: Depth, Simultaneity, and Tempo in Counterinsurgency*, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advances Military Studies, 2012.

⁴¹ See, for example, Walter L. Perry and John Gordon IV, *Analytic Support to Intelligence in Counterinsurgencies*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-682-OSD, 2008.

of insurgent no-go zones aided by reliable human intelligence and an actionable plan for how to exploit that intelligence.

Table 4.16
Initiative Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Fighting in phase initiated primarily by COIN forces	Yes	10	22
	No	21	6

Table 4.17 shows the relationship between case outcomes and the COIN force having both the initiative and significant intelligence (as per the intelligence concept described later in this chapter). The COIN force won in all but one case in which it had both the initiative and the intelligence to support it. These results, taken together, constitute *strong support for initiative as a concept*.

Table 4.17
Initiative and Intelligence Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Both initiative and intelligence	Yes	1	16
	No	30	12

“Crush Them”

“Crush them” is a concept singularly focused on the kinetic elimination of both active insurgents and the support they need. Clancy and Crosset suggest that, if diagnosed sufficiently early, a nascent insur-

gency can be annihilated through the vigorous application of force and repression.⁴² While Clancy and Crosset's version of this concept is intended to apply only to nascent insurgencies, "crush them" is also a more general concept for COIN that predates the modern era.⁴³

This position has but a single tenet:

- Escalating repression can crush an insurgency.

This concept sits uneasily alongside legitimacy and popular support-based concepts, because repression and unrestrained force are unlikely to be well regarded by the population at large. Indeed, an established insurgency met with escalating repression would likely gain further domestic and international support and legitimacy. What separates a nascent insurgency from a mature one and the resulting implications for this theory are not well articulated in the existing literature. The use of escalating repression is not limited strictly to dictatorships, but democracies typically lack the political will to employ this tactic for a prolonged period. After all, democracies, in theory at least, must respond to their domestic constituencies, while dictatorships have far more leeway in crafting COIN strategies. This concept sounds like it belongs in the "iron fist" playbook, and, in fact, most COIN forces employing "crush them" generally belong in that category. The two are not equivalent, however. An iron fist COIN effort focuses almost exclusively on the insurgents, and almost exclusively through kinetic means. That does not necessarily mean that the force applied to the insurgents is not discriminate and proportionate, or that supporting or source populations are also targeted. "Crush them," however, focuses both on the application of force to insurgents and on repression of supporting populations.

⁴² James Clancy and Chuck Crosset, "Measuring Effectiveness in Irregular Warfare," *Parameters*, Summer 2007. The authors note that "combat operations have defeated insurgencies by overwhelming and annihilating the insurgency and its supporters through bombings, massive raids, heavy shelling, and even torture and executions" (p. 91). "The quick and overwhelming smothering of an infant insurgency is a very effective tactic" (p. 92).

⁴³ Indeed, Roman "decimation" can be seen as an early application of this approach.

Escalating repression as a COIN concept is captured in the analysis by two factors:

- The COIN force employed escalating repression.
- The COIN force employed collective punishment.

Our data provide *strong evidence against repression as a concept for COIN*, as there is a strong *negative* correlation between the presence of both “crush them” factors and case outcome. (See Table 4.18.) Using repression does not guarantee defeat (11 of the 34 COIN forces using escalating repression and collective punishment still managed to win), but it is unambiguously a poor COIN concept.

Table 4.18
Both “Crush Them” Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Both “crush them” factors	Yes	23	11
	No	8	17

Amnesty/Rewards

This COIN concept is little more than a piece of practical advice, and the benefits accruing to amnesty or reward programs are a motive-focused way to diminish the active insurgents that could support the elements of many other concepts. An amnesty program is usually one of the first steps toward establishing an effective disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ For further reading on the DDR process, see Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein, “Demobilization and Reintegration,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 51, No. 4, 2007; Jeremy Weinstein and Macartan Humphreys, *Disentangling the Determinants of Successful Demobilization and Reintegration*, Working Paper No. 69, Washington, D.C.: Center

The logic and tenets are simple:⁴⁵

- Amnesty is a potentially attractive option for insurgents, reducing the need for a “fight to the finish.”
- Even expensive rewards can be more cost-effective than large-scale military operations.

Three factors represent amnesty in this analysis:

- An amnesty or reward program was in place.
- The amnesty program reduced the number of insurgents.
- Phase included significant DDR efforts beyond amnesty.

The empirical cut point required at least two factors. (See Table 4.19.) All ten cases that had all three factors were COIN wins. While this appears to offer strong support for this concept, two shortcomings in our analysis require that we temper our support. First, the effectiveness of an amnesty program hinges on a number of variables but mostly on the attractiveness of the offer relative to alternatives. The attractiveness of an amnesty offer depends in part on the insurgents’ perceptions of their prospects for success. This leaves this factor as partially tautological: If you are beating the insurgents, they are more likely to accept your amnesty. Second is the issue of causal ordering. Does the COIN force win because it offers amnesty, or does the COIN force offer amnesty because it is winning? Our phases are not sufficiently fine-grained to discriminate the sequence of events enough to tell. If we are just interested in correlation, then it does not really matter: Effective amnesty programs co-occur with COIN wins. If we are interested in plausible causal explanations (as we are), then our analysis is not well structured to adjudicate the contribution of this concept. What we can tell from our data is that we do not reject this concept. That is, while we cannot determine whether winners offered amnesty or amnesty

for Global Development, 2005; and Nicole Ball and Luc van de Goor, *Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Mapping Issues, Dilemmas and Guiding Principles*, Clingendael, Netherlands: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, August 2006.

⁴⁵ Long, 2006, pp. 45–49.

offers led to victory, we can tell that amnesty is correlated with victory: Amnesty does not lead to insurgent victory. *We interpret this as offering minimal support to amnesty as a COIN concept.*

Table 4.19
At Least Two Amnesty Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least two amnesty factors	Yes	3	16
	No	28	12

Contemporary Concepts for COIN

Strategic Communication

Strategic communication is a relatively recent term of art for coordinated whole-of-government persuasion and influence efforts, synchronizing the communicative content of both words and deeds. When applied to the COIN context, it suggests a motive-focused and legitimacy-based concept for which we have distilled the following tenets:

- Maintain credibility.
- Minimize the “say-do” gap, the distance between COIN force claims and actions.
- Prioritize consistency of message.
- Continuity of message over time improves credibility.
- Kinetic and nonkinetic messaging is noncontradictory.
- Core messages flow from policy goals.
- There is unity of effort.
- Core themes contribute to COIN operational goals.
- There is expectation management.

Capturing the essence of strategic communication as a concept for COIN is challenging. None of the COIN literature predating the turn of the current century explicitly mentions strategic communication, simply because the term was not yet in use. Lacking a period synonym, much of relevance to strategic communication can be found in discussions of PSYOP, information operations (IO), propaganda, political warfare, or simply as subtext among the principles and theories of COIN.

Though no one explicitly articulates a theory of strategic communication for COIN, there are sufficiently clear statements and recommendations in the literature to extrapolate a strategic communication COIN concept.⁴⁶ Existing work on strategic communication implies that, done correctly, strategic communication can deliver the support (or at least tacit approval) of an indigenous population, reduce motives for support for an insurgency, and sometimes influence the behavior of insurgents themselves. Strategic communication is *not* posited as a sufficient solution to the challenge of COIN—that is, no one suggests that effective strategic communication alone is enough to end an insurgency. Strategic communication is variously held to be a force multiplier or one important pillar concept in a multipronged approach to countering insurgency.

Strategic communication was represented in the analysis by five factors:

- COIN force and government actions were consistent with messages (delivering on promises).
- The COIN force maintained credibility with populations in the area of conflict (includes expectation management).

⁴⁶ See, for example, Mari K. Eder, "Toward Strategic Communication," *Military Review*, July–August 2007; Richard J. Josten, "Strategic Communication: Key Enabler for Elements of National Power," *IO Sphere*, Summer 2006; Jeffrey B. Jones, "Strategic Communication: A Mandate for the United States," *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 39, 4th Quarter 2005; Richard Halloran, "Strategic Communication," *Parameters*, Autumn 2007; Christopher Paul, *Information Operations—Doctrine and Practice: A Handbook*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2008; and David P. Anders, *Developing an Operational Level Strategic Communication Model for Counterinsurgency*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 2009.

- Messages or themes cohered with the overall COIN approach.
- COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations.
- Themes and messages were coordinated across all involved government agencies.⁴⁷

As noted elsewhere in this report, the tested concepts for COIN are not all mutually exclusive and often have tenets and, thus, factors in common. However, all five of these factors are unique to strategic communication in this analysis. (That is, none of these factors also appears in another concept.)

The empirical cut point for the sum of strategic communication factors present in a given case was three or more, so we considered strategic communication to have been employed in any case in which at least three of these five strategic communication factors were present.

Strategic communication as a concept for COIN receives strong support in this analysis. In all 12 cases in which the COIN force realized at least three of the strategic communication factors, it prevailed. (See Table 4.20.)

Table 4.20
At Least Three Strategic Communication Factors Versus
Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least three strategic communication factors	Yes	0	12
	No	31	16

⁴⁷ Note that following the core tenets of the approach, a factor addressing unity of command was originally included among the factors representing strategic communication. Subsequent discussion led to the decision to treat unity of command as its own separate concept and remove it from strategic communication. See further discussion in the relevant subsection of Appendix D.

COIN FM

FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, released in December 2006, was the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps' collective attempt to update their doctrine to address the changes in COIN since the end of the Cold War.⁴⁸ The concept implicit in FM 3-24 has these tenets:

- Provide security.
- Establish government capabilities.
- Provide basic services.
- Address grievances.
- Reduce corruption.

All of the above help separate the insurgents from the population, and this popular support improves intelligence collection and contributes to legitimacy.

FM 3-24 contains a population-centric concept for COIN with an emphasis on security, development, positive relations, and legitimacy. It is a hybrid built by combining traditional COIN concepts with new insights. According to FM 3-24, legitimacy is the main objective of COIN forces and, as such, all operations should be undertaken with consideration for the effect they have on the legitimacy of the COIN force and the host-nation government.⁴⁹

This concept is clearly primarily motive-focused and popular support-based, and it makes explicit connections between popular support and COIN enablers, such as improved intelligence, reduction of inputs needed by insurgents, and a relationship between support and COIN force or government legitimacy.

FM 3-24 was represented in our analysis by nine factors:

- A perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.

⁴⁸ See Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006.

⁴⁹ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 38.

- Government corruption was reduced or good governance increased since the onset of the conflict.
- Insurgent-claimed grievances were substantially addressed since the onset of the conflict
- The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.
- The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control.
- There were short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform in the area controlled or claimed by the COIN force.
- The COIN force received substantial intelligence from the population in the area of conflict.
- The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force.
- The COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages.

As a blend of classic and contemporary COIN thinking, the concept implicit in FM 3-24 shares several of these factors with other COIN concepts. The empirical cut point for the summation of these nine factors was four, so the factor stack representing FM 3-24 is “at least four COIN FM factors present.”

FM 3-24 receives strong empirical support, with all 19 cases having at least four COIN FM factors present in the decisive phase being won by the government. (See Table 4.21.) FM 3-24 was being revised at the time of this writing.⁵⁰ These findings suggest that the core principles of the 2007 version have served well against modern insurgencies and should predominantly be preserved.

⁵⁰ U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, “Army Seeks Input on Revision to FM 3-24,” June 8, 2012.

Table 4.21
At Least Four COIN FM Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four COIN FM factors	Yes	0	19
	No	31	9

Clear, Hold, and Build

“Clear, hold, and build” is a hybrid of pacification and development, and it is a distinct and separable part of COIN doctrine.⁵¹ In this analysis, it is represented by the following core tenets:

- Clear the area by destroying, capturing, or forcing the withdrawal of the insurgents.
- Hold the area with security forces to effectively reestablish a government presence at the local level.
- Build support for the government by protecting the populace and improving economic, social, cultural, and medical services.⁵²

Clear, hold, and build is represented by three factors in the analysis:

- COIN force undertook “clear” of “clear, hold, and build” in area of conflict.
- COIN force undertook “hold” of “clear, hold, and build” in area of conflict.

⁵¹ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006.

⁵² FM 3-24 provides these tenets as written; see also Colin H. Kahl, “COIN of the Realm: Is There a Future for Counterinsurgency?” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 6, November–December 2007; Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian, eds., *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2008; and Brian Burton and John A. Nagl, “Learning as We Go: The US Army Adapts to Counterinsurgency in Iraq, July 2004–December 2006,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 2008.

- COIN force undertook “build” of “clear, hold, and build” in area of conflict.

For most supported concepts, the empirical cutpoint is clear. Not so for clear, hold, and build. As Table 4.22 shows, either “at least two” or “all three” clear, hold, and build factors would make a good empirical cutpoint. Having all three of clear, hold, and build is a strong discriminator, with all cases meeting that higher threshold being COIN wins. However, only seven COIN forces were able to do so. When only “clear” and “hold” were accomplished, the COIN force still managed to win 13 of 18 times. Regardless of which threshold is used, *this constitutes strong evidence in support of clear, hold, and build.*

Table 4.22
Number of Clear, Hold, and Build Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Number of clear, hold, and build factors	3	0	7
	2	5	13
	1	3	1
	0	23	7

“Beat Cop”

The beat-cop concept is concerned with the employment of the COIN force. If the COIN force is routinely present in communities in the area of conflict and conducts regular dismount patrols—becoming individually familiar with and known to the local population (in the manner of the traditional urban beat cop)—then numerous advantages are envisioned to accrue to the COIN force. Such community policing or regular dismount patrolling in the mode of a beat cop

- enables intelligence collection
- creates greater understanding of the local situation
- deters criminal activity

- deters insurgent support and activity
- creates trust between the COIN force and the population.⁵³

Various beat-cop discussions imply a subordinate form of the more general pacification concept and are closely aligned with population-centric COIN theory. The beat-cop concept is implicit in much of the advice offered in FM 3-24, which places the onus on soldiers and marines to connect with the population they seek to protect. At its core, this concept is about establishing and maintaining trust with the locals. As David Kilcullen asserts, “For your side to win, the people do not have to like you but they must respect you, accept that your actions benefit them, and trust your integrity and ability to deliver on promises, particularly regarding their security.”⁵⁴

Familiarity breeds trust, which, in turn, can lead the COIN force to garner intelligence. While fundamentally in agreement with the core principles of pacification concepts, these practices are focused on how best to employ security forces in a pacified or partially pacified area.

The beat-cop corollary to the pacification concept is represented in our analysis by nine factors:

- The perception of security was created or maintained among populations in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.
- The COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in or enabled community policing in areas that it controlled or claimed to control, and these militias did not work at cross-purposes with COIN or government forces.
- The COIN force received substantial intelligence from the population in the area of conflict.
- In the area of conflict, the COIN force was not perceived as worse than the insurgents.
- The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.

⁵³ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, pp. 229–231.

⁵⁴ Kilcullen, 2006a, p. 29.

- The COIN force employed “counter-gangs,” “scouts,” or “ferret forces” against insurgents.
- Significant numbers of largely effective police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional military in COIN forces used.
- The government employed significant numbers of locally recruited military, paramilitary, militia, or police forces.
- COIN forces primarily deployed in a space-domination/passive-presence role.

The empirical cut point for the beat-cop concept is at least four of these nine factors. Fifteen of the 16 cases with at least four of these nine factors were COIN wins. (See Table 4.23.) Based on this evidence, *the beat-cop concept receives strong support*.

Table 4.23
At Least Four “Beat-Cop” Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four “beat-cop” factors	Yes	1	15
	No	30	13

A Word About Militias

Several concepts (including beat cop) call for the use of local militias to extend the COIN force’s armed presence or allow locals to have a stake in their own security.⁵⁵ Recent successes in Iraq have made militias more prominent in contemporary discussions.⁵⁶ This research

⁵⁵ Historical examples of militias used in COIN operations include the Popular Forces, the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups, the People’s Self-Defense Forces in Vietnam, and the *quadrillage* in Algeria, although, as Austin Long points out, the forces used by the *quadrillage* were mainly regular troops instead of locals. See Long, 2006, p. 54.

⁵⁶ See Austin Long, “The Anbar Awakening,” *Survival*, Vol. 50, No. 2, April–May 2008.

provides mixed evidence on militias. During development of the case studies, we quickly realized that creating or fostering of militias could lead to both positive and negative results. Indeed, we inductively added a factor, “Militias/local irregular forces did *not* work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government,” to most concepts that recommend militias. Fully 42 of our cases employed militias or otherwise enabled community policing. Eighteen of those 42 cases were COIN wins, and 24 were losses. The use of militias alone is unrelated to outcome, having a modest negative correlation. When militias that worked at cross-purposes with the COIN force or the government are removed, however, a modest relationship between militias and COIN success appears: Eight cases in which the COIN force won employed militias that did not work at cross-purposes with the government, as did six COIN losses.

A word of caution: None of the COIN forces that armed and recruited militias *wanted* them to work at cross-purposes, but roughly two-thirds (28 of 42) *did*, and with generally poor results (18 of the 28 cases in which a militia worked at cross-purposes with the government were COIN losses). This supports a recommendation for extreme caution in the use of militias in support of COIN.

“Boots on the Ground”

Without articulating exactly why, several scholars and observers insist on a certain minimum force ratio, either between counterinsurgents and insurgents or between COIN forces and the population. See, for example, James Quinlivan’s foundational research in this area, which reports historical ratios of security forces to population for a number of stability operations;⁵⁷ FM 3-24, which advocates a troop density of approximately 20–25 counterinsurgents per 1,000 residents;⁵⁸ and Douglas Ollivant and Eric Chewning, who advocate a 10-to-1 or 20-to-1 ratio of counterinsurgent to insurgent to prevent the develop-

⁵⁷ James T. Quinlivan, “Force Requirements in Stability Operations,” *Parameters*, Winter 1995.

⁵⁸ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 23.

ment of insurgent safe areas.⁵⁹ The logic behind “boots on the ground” would presumably follow that of other pacification concepts, though it might also include elements of legitimacy associated with force presence or connect to traditional military theory concerned with the minimum sufficient force with which to conduct certain types of operations. As far as we can discern, those advocating boots on the ground see the following advantages:

- The presence of forces deters adversary action and reassures the population.
- COIN requires a certain amount of infantry presence spread throughout the contested area.⁶⁰

These are testable tenets and so are sufficient for this analysis.

This concept for COIN is represented by six factors in our analysis:

- Perception of security created or maintained among populations in areas the COIN force claimed to control.
- The COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control.
- The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in area of conflict.
- No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to the COIN force.
- The COIN force included significant numbers of largely effective police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional personnel.
- COIN forces primarily deployed in a space-domination/passive-presence role.

The summation of boots on the ground factors versus case outcome shows that at least three of the six factors is the empirical cut

⁵⁹ Douglas A. Ollivant and Eric D. Chewning, “Producing Victory: Rethinking Conventional Forces in COIN Operations,” *Military Review*, July–August 2006, p. 52.

⁶⁰ Ollivant and Chewning, 2006, p. 52.

point. Seventeen of 18 cases with at least three of these six factors were COIN wins. (See Table 4.24.) *This constitutes evidence in strong support of the boots on the ground concept.*

Table 4.24
At Least Three “Boots on the Ground” Factors Versus
Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least three “boots on the ground” factors	Yes	1	17
	No	30	11

Note that this factor stack includes the use of militias and does not actively exclude militias that worked at cross-purposes. Apparently, using militias and realizing some of the other boots on the ground factors correlates with militias not working at cross-purposes or otherwise diminishes the negative effects of such behavior.

“Put a Local Face on It”

A piece of practical advice from contemporary operations advises the COIN force to seek to “put a local face on it.”⁶¹ This advice implies that local communities in insurgent-contested areas need security and development and that well-prepared indigenous forces serve most effectively in meeting those needs.⁶² Tenets include the following:

⁶¹ David H. Petraeus, “Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq,” *Military Review*, January–February 2006, pp. 3–4.

⁶² There are authors who go against the grain in this regard. Some believe that a focus on the development of indigenous forces conflates a state’s ability to exercise functional control over its territory with state security capacity. Eric Jardine argues that the scope of a state’s control over its national territory is really a function of both the state’s aggregate security capacity and the costs of projecting its power over a distance. As such, functional territorial control is maximized when the return on investment in security capacity is equal to the return on investment in factors that reduce the costs of power projection. See Eric Jardine, “Control-

- Invest in training, developing, and equipping local security forces.⁶³
- Indigenous forces may need training in the use of measured force, in addition to other COIN training.⁶⁴
- Appropriate indigenous actors will know the culture and will be less vexing to the population (if they restrain themselves to proportional force).⁶⁵
- Indigenous forces can form (or may already have) long-term relationships that can facilitate the COIN effort.⁶⁶
- Indigenous forces need to develop sustainable security capabilities before foreign COIN forces can leave.⁶⁷

This concept harkens back to the time of classic counterinsurgent and well-known Arabist T. E. Lawrence, who famously quipped, “Better the Arabs do it tolerably than you do it perfectly.”⁶⁸ The greatest difficulty here is finding indigenous forces that are up to the task of conducting COIN operations that meet U.S. standards. Even after months and years of training, some indigenous forces still may not be able to reach a level acceptable to U.S. military trainers. This poses an obvious dilemma related to timetables for withdrawal and the consequences of being perceived as occupiers.

Like all pacification-related concepts, this is a motive-focused concept for COIN. This COIN advice is predicated on the assumption

ling Territory and Population During Counterinsurgency: State Security Capacity and the Costs of Power Projection,” *Civil Wars*, Vol. 14, No. 2, June 2012b.

⁶³ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, pp. 199–235. See also Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, “All Counterinsurgency Is Local,” *The Atlantic*, October 2008.

⁶⁴ Sepp, 2005, p. 11.

⁶⁵ Gompert et al., 2008, p. 81. See also Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 247.

⁶⁶ James S. Corum, *Training Indigenous Forces in Counterinsurgency: A Tale of Two Insurgencies*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, March 2006.

⁶⁷ Sepp, 2005, p. 12.

⁶⁸ T. E. Lawrence, “The Twenty-Seven Articles,” *The Arab Bulletin*, August 20, 1917.

that the primary COIN force is from out of town—either an extranational force (as the United States will always be as a COIN actor) or a national force that is sufficiently culturally different to be considered “foreign” by the locals.⁶⁹

Five factors represent this corollary concept in our analysis:

- The COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in or enabled community policing in areas that it controlled or claimed to control, and these militias did not work at cross-purposes with COIN or government forces.
- The COIN force did not employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations.
- Indigenous forces conducted the majority of COIN operations.
- The COIN force included significant numbers of largely effective police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional military personnel who were locally recruited.
- Development was not predominantly provided by (or perceived as being provided by) an external actor.

For all 59 core cases, there is a modest empirical cutpoint at four or more of these five factors. (See Table 4.25.)

Table 4.25
At Least Four “Put a Local Face on It” Factors Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four “put a local face on it” factors	Yes	4	10
	No	27	18

⁶⁹ An example of the latter point is Russian COIN forces fighting in Chechnya.

However, this concept is really only meant to apply to cases with external actors. When examining the factor stack for “put a local face on it” for subpopulations involving external actors (for which it should theoretically be most applicable), virtually no correlation was observed. We examined this factor stack against the outcomes of the 28 cases involving a direct external supporter, as well as the divided external subpopulations: the 13 cases with limited direct external support and the 15 cases with significant external ground troops. Virtually no correlation was observed. See Table 4.26 for an example. Taken together, these analyses provide *minimal support for “put a local face on it” as a COIN concept*. Narrative analyses suggest that this concept should and has contributed to legitimacy, but apparently legitimacy and its contribution to COIN success is driven primarily by factors beyond the implementation of this concept.

Table 4.26
Sum of “Put a Local Face on It” Factors Versus Case Outcome for Cases Involving External Forces (n = 28)

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Sum of “put a local face on it” factors	5	0	0
	4	2	3
	3	5	4
	2	4	4
	1	1	0
	0	2	3

Cultural Awareness

Offered as necessary but certainly not sufficient is the proposition that cultural awareness is critical to COIN success. The tenets are straightforward and have clear face validity:

- Cultural insensitivity can undermine otherwise successful COIN practices.

- Good cultural awareness is an enabler.
- Without an understanding of the culture, much intelligence cannot be understood and will likely be improperly applied.⁷⁰

This supporting concept is relevant only when the COIN force is not culturally “native” to the area of conflict (by virtue of being outsiders or culturally dissimilar indigenes). In the modern era of instant communication, a seemingly innocent cultural faux pas can be disseminated around the globe in minutes, exposing the COIN force to worldwide criticism and portraying a negative image for all to see.

Furthermore, just as with the United States in Japan following WWII, unfamiliarity with the language and culture means that an occupier or COIN force must rely more on the locals and any pre-existing political, bureaucratic, and social structures.⁷¹

This corollary to other COIN concepts is intended to apply only where the COIN force is not culturally similar to the population in the area of conflict. It is represented by six factors in our analysis:

- The COIN force did *not* employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations.
- The COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages.
- COIN or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents.
- Government did not sponsor or protect unpopular economic and social arrangements or cultural institutions.
- Government did not repress and/or exclude significant societal groups from state power or resources.
- Force protection actions by external COIN forces (if present) did not alienate the population.

⁷⁰ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 41.

⁷¹ David Edelstein, “Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail,” *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Summer 2004, p. 67.

Across the 59 core cases, none of these six factors has a particularly strong individual correlation with case outcome. When assembled as a factor stack, the overall correlation is not sufficient to suggest a clear cutpoint. While having all six factors does correlate perfectly with COIN success (all seven cases with all six factors present are COIN wins), there is nothing in the concept as posed that suggests that complete adherence to all factors should be necessary, begging the question why seven of the 13 cases in which five of the six factors were realized were COIN losses). See Table 4.27.

Table 4.27
Sum of Cultural Awareness Factors Versus Case Outcome

	Case Outcome	
	COIN Loss	COIN Win
6	0	7
5	7	6
4	5	1
3	7	7
2	8	3
1	2	3
0	2	1

Sum of cultural awareness factors

Of course, cultural awareness should be most relevant where COIN forces are culturally different from local populations, which is most likely when an external actor is involved. As with “put a local face on it,” we examined this factors stack against the outcomes of the 28 cases involving a direct external supporter, as well as the divided external subpopulations: the 13 cases with limited direct external support and the 15 cases with significant external ground troops. Virtually no correlation was observed, as shown in the example in Table 4.28. Taken together, these analyses provide *minimal support for cultural awareness*. Narrative analyses suggest that this concept may be an enabler or inhibitor of the successful implementation of other

COIN concepts when the COIN force is culturally dissimilar to the population, and several case narratives show successful COIN forces demonstrating cultural awareness (the British in Sierra Leone, for example) or unsuccessful COIN forces running afoul of cultural sensitivity (the Egyptians in Yemen, for example). However, the narrative analyses also provide several examples of cases in which an external COIN force is able to succeed without any cultural sensitivity, most of which are “iron fist” efforts, such as the Chinese in Tibet.

Table 4.28
Sum of Cultural Awareness Factors Versus Case
Outcome for Cases Involving External Forces (n = 28)

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Sum of cultural awareness factors	6	0	2
	5	4	2
	4	3	0
	3	2	5
	2	3	2
	1	0	1
	0	2	1

Commitment and Motivation

The concept of commitment and motivation was introduced into the study as a working hypothesis after early discussions of case narratives for the cases involving external actors produced a relatively straightforward maxim for intervening forces: “You can’t want it more than they do.” While this hypothesis was initially conceived in relation to external actors, our research suggested that it could be applied more broadly and to cases of all types: To defeat an insurgency, the government and COIN force must be committed to doing so. The core tenets of this concept are as follows:

- If a government is more interested in political infighting, self-enrichment, or protecting unfair divisions than in combating an insurgency, it will not be effective at COIN. Defeating the insurgency must be the top priority of both the government and the security forces.
- When a COIN force is committed and motivated, it is more likely to be effective, adapt to changing circumstances, and prove resourceful in the pursuit of its objectives without becoming overly dependent on support from another actor or entity.⁷²

Commitment and motivation was captured in this analysis by the following factors:

- Insurgent force *not* individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.
- COIN force or allies did *not* rely on looting for sustainment.
- COIN force and government did *not* have different goals/level of commitment or both had relatively low levels of commitment.
- Government did *not* sponsor or protect unpopular economic and social arrangements or cultural institutions.
- Government did *not* involve corrupt and arbitrary personalistic rule.
- Government type was *not* kleptocracy.
- Elites did *not* have perverse incentives to continue conflict.
- The country was *not* economically dependent on an external actor.

The empirical cutpoint for this factor stack proved to be four or more. All 28 COIN wins had four or more of the commitment and motivation factors. (See Table 4.29.) This held across all cases, not just those in which an external actor sought to bolster and encourage a

⁷² Robert M. Cassidy, "The Long Small War: Indigenous Forces for Counterinsurgency," *Parameters*, Vol. 36, No. 2, Summer 2006; David H. Ucko, *The New Counterinsurgency Era: Transforming the U.S. Military for Modern Wars*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009; Daniel Byman, Peter Chalk, Bruce Hoffman, William Rosenau, and David Brannan, *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1405-OTI, 2001.

host-nation government. *This constitutes strong evidence in support of commitment and motivation.*

Table 4.29
At Least Four Commitment and Motivation Factors Versus
Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four commitment and motivation factors	Yes	14	28
	No	17	0

Tangible Support Reduction

What we call the “tangible support reduction concept” is a contemporary spin on cost-benefit and popular support–based concepts. We hypothesized and collected evidence on this concept for the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* study, where it received strong support. Building on that research, tangible support reduction became foundational in the proposed typology of COIN theory discussed in Chapter One. This concept posits that it does not matter whether it is by reducing motives or by reducing physical opportunities/capabilities, the way to defeat an insurgency is to eliminate its tangible support.

This perspective follows the cost-benefit concept in suggesting that it is the support the insurgents receive, from wherever they get it, that is the real center of gravity.⁷³ Tenets include the following:⁷⁴

⁷³ Christopher Paul, “How Do Terrorists Generate and Maintain Support?” in Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin, eds., *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-849-OSD, 2009.

⁷⁴ Christopher Paul, “As a Fish Swims in the Sea: Relationships Between Factors Contributing to Support for Terrorist or Insurgent Groups,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 33, No. 6, June 2010.

- Insurgencies need manpower, funding, materiel, sanctuary, intelligence,⁷⁵ and tolerance.⁷⁶
- These needs can be met through self-supply, looting, purchases, or reliance on an external source.⁷⁷
- External sources could be local populations, state sponsors, diaspora communities, or other groups within or outside the area of conflict.
- Effective COIN interrupts the supply of support to insurgents.

This concept does not take the full “systems” concept of the classic cost-benefit concept but simply suggests that the COIN force identify and focus on depriving the insurgents of the sources of support on which they actually rely. When the insurgents draw significant support from the population, this concept is wholly consonant with popular support-based concepts.

Insurgents’ many support needs can be met in myriad ways. Ten factors were identified to represent this concept from a COIN perspective in our analysis:

- The flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent.
- Important external support to insurgents was significantly reduced.
- Important internal support to insurgents was significantly reduced.
- Insurgents’ ability to replenish resources was significantly diminished.
- Insurgents were unable to maintain or grow their force size.

⁷⁵ Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, November 2004.

⁷⁶ Paul, 2009.

⁷⁷ Anthony Vinci, “The ‘Problems of Mobilization’ and the Analysis of Armed Groups,” *Parameters*, Spring 2006, p. 51.

- COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgent processes.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence.
- COIN forces effectively disrupted insurgent financing.

The empirical cut point for this set of factors proved to be three or more. The COIN side won all cases in which three or more tangible support reduction factors appeared. All 28 COIN wins had at least three tangible support reduction factors, and only two losses had more than two. (See Table 4.30.) *This is extremely strong evidence in support of a tangible support reduction concept for COIN.*

Table 4.30
At Least Three Tangible Support Reduction Factors
Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least three tangible support reduction factors	Yes	2	28
	No	29	0

Tangible Support Versus Popular Support

Many of the concepts described and tested here are based on a population-centric theory of COIN. They maintain that the population is the center of gravity and that wooing the population, through legitimacy, security, investment, and services, or some combination of these or other things, will lead the population to renounce the insurgents, inform on them, vote against them, and *deny them materiel support*.

If insurgents are meeting their support needs from the population in the area of conflict, then tangible support and popular support

would be largely the same thing, and persuading that population to stop meeting the needs of the insurgents would be an effective tangible support reduction strategy. Are they the same, however?

In 42 of the 59 core cases, popular support and tangible support covaried. That is, when the insurgents had the support of the population, they were able to maintain their tangible support, and vice versa. The 17 cases in which these conditions did not correspond are quite instructional: In three cases, the COIN force had the support of the population but did not accrue at least three tangible insurgent support reduction factors. In all three of these cases, the insurgents prevailed. In 14 cases, the COIN force reduced at least three tangible support factors but did not gain the support of the population, yet the COIN force won 12 of those 14. One of the two COIN losses was the Lebanese Civil War. It can be argued that no matter how successful the Israelis were in reducing the insurgents' tangible support, the predominantly Shi'a Muslim population of southern Lebanon would never support soldiers from the Jewish state.

This suggests an important caveat to the conventional wisdom that the population is *the* center of gravity. It appears that, in fact, *tangible support* is "the" center of gravity.⁷⁸ Tangible support usually (but not always) stems from or connects to popular support. When it does, treating the population as the center of gravity will lead to the desired outcome; that outcome is less certain when insurgents' tangible support does not come from the population. This agrees with advice published elsewhere that COIN forces should identify the specific support needs and sources of that support for their specific adver-

⁷⁸ The *is* in quotation marks here as a reminder that we reject a single-factor or unitary explanation of successful COIN that hinges on only one center of gravity. The core argument of our original study, that "victory has a thousand fathers," recognizes that a substantial collection of effective practices or a host of complementary lines of operation is what wins the day in COIN. The theoretical construct offered in Chapter One and validated throughout this report suggests the importance of balance between reducing insurgent tangible support and reducing the insurgents themselves. To the extent that one area of COIN emphasis is primary, however, these analyses suggest that tangible support is more critical than popular support and that the distinction is immaterial when insurgent tangible support needs are met primarily by the population.

sary.⁷⁹ This also supports the typology of COIN theories advocated in Chapter One, seeking to replace “population-centric/enemy-centric” with dichotomies on action type (motive-focused or kinetic) and target (tangible support or active insurgents).

Criticality of Intelligence

COIN doctrine also asserts the criticality of actionable intelligence to COIN success.⁸⁰ Intelligence is clearly important to many of the concepts listed here. It is difficult to articulate specific tenets without making explicit the individual connections to some of the broader concepts. Generally, statements of this concept offer a single tenet:

- Actionable intelligence drives successful COIN operations.

This concept is captured in the analysis by two factors:

- Intelligence was adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on the COIN force’s terms.
- Intelligence was adequate to allow COIN forces to disrupt insurgent processes or operations.

The empirical cut point is at least one of the two. Twenty-two of the 28 cases won by COIN forces included at least one of these two intelligence factors, while both factors were absent in 30 of the 31 losing cases.⁸¹ (See Table 4.31.) This is *strong evidence in support of the criticality of intelligence*.

⁷⁹ Paul, 2010.

⁸⁰ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 41.

⁸¹ The two cases in which the COIN force managed to prevail without at least one intelligence factor present were El Salvador and Uganda.

Table 4.31
At Least One Intelligence Factor Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least one intelligence factor	Yes	1	22
	No	30	6

Flexibility and Adaptability

Overwhelming firepower and sophisticated technology have never been guarantors of victory in COIN operations. At no time has this been truer than in today's operating environment, in which insurgents use the Internet to great effect and use rudimentary materials to construct increasingly deadly improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to counter COIN forces. Nagl's *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* emphasizes the importance of the COIN force's ability to adapt quickly and effectively to changes in warfare.⁸² This practical advice (flexibility and adaptability) extends to other, broader concepts for COIN. The tenets are simple:

- COIN is a two-player game against an adaptive adversary.
- A successful COIN force must learn and adapt.⁸³

The insistence that only an adaptive COIN force can prevail is represented by a single factor:

- The COIN force did not fail to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.

⁸² Nagl, 2005.

⁸³ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2006, p. 46.

All 28 COIN forces that prevailed avoided failure to adapt in the decisive phase, as did 11 of the losing COIN forces. (See Table 4.32.) This constitutes *strong evidence in support of the importance of flexibility and adaptability*.

Table 4.32
Flexibility and Adaptability Versus Case Outcome

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Flexibility and adaptability	Yes	11	28
	No	20	0

The case-level analysis showed that when a COIN force failed to adapt, it never prevailed. This holds at the phase level as well. In no phase in which the COIN force failed to adapt did it end the phase with the upper hand. However, it remains possible for the inflexible to recover. In fully 17 cases, the COIN force failed to adapt (and did not have the upper hand) in an early or intermediate phase but ultimately prevailed in the case.

Summary of the Tests of the Concepts

Table 4.33 summarizes the results for each concept. Each concept is listed, along with whether it received strong support from the evidence in our analysis, minimal support from the evidence, or strong evidence against. As reported at the beginning of this chapter, we assessed strength of support based on the ability of the concept’s implementation (by way of its factor stack) to predict or discriminate between case outcomes. Concepts were considered to have strong support if the bivariate relationship between the concept’s factor stack and the outcome was very strong (i.e., using it and it alone is a very strong indica-

tor of the outcome); minimal support if there was a modest correlation between the concept's factor stack and the outcome; and strong evidence against if the concept was implemented in a greater proportion of losses than wins.

As Table 4.33 shows, most of the concepts we tested receive strong support. For those concepts, this is firm validation in the advice drawn from common sense or based on a small number of cases. For those receiving minimal support, these concepts may still have merit in specific contexts or as one of many strands of a multilayered campaign or composite approach, but they are not strongly correlated with historical COIN success and should not be the primary focus of a COIN campaign or particularly emphasized when developing capabilities, plans, or training for COIN. The single concept receiving strong evidence against, "crush them," is shown to be more strongly correlated with failure than with success in modern COIN and should serve as a strong cautionary tale about the prospect for campaigns that rely exclusively on force.

The next chapter presents the results from our analyses and findings beyond the tests of these 24 distinct concepts for COIN.

Table 4.33
Strength of Evidentiary Support for 24 Concepts for COIN

Concept	Factor/Factor Stack	Degree of Evidentiary Support
Development	at least two of four development factors	Strong support
Pacification	at least two of six pacification factors	Strong support
Legitimacy (government)	at least one of two government legitimacy factors	Strong support
Legitimacy (use of force)	at least four of six legitimate use of force factors	Strong support
Reform	at least four of five reform factors	Strong support
Redress	three redress factors, no clear cutpoint	Minimal support
Democracy	at least one of three democracy factors	Minimal support
Unity of effort	the single unity of effort factor	Strong support
Resettlement	one or both of two resettlement factors	Minimal support
Cost-benefit	at least two of six cost-benefit factors	Strong support
Border control	the single border control factor	Strong support
Initiative	the single initiative factor	Strong support
"Crush them"	both "crush them" factors	Strong evidence against
Amnesty/rewards	at least two of three amnesty factors	Minimal support
Strategic communication	at least three of five strategic communication factors	Strong support
Field Manual 3-24 (Counterinsurgency)	at least four of nine FM 3-24 factors	Strong support
Clear, hold, and build	at least two of clear, hold, and build	Strong support
"Beat cop"	at least four of nine "beat cop" factors	Strong support
"Boots on the ground"	at least three of six "boots on the ground" factors	Strong support
"Put a local face on it"	four of five "put a local face on it" factors	Minimal support
Cultural awareness	six cultural awareness factors, no clear cutpoint	Minimal support
Commitment and motivation	at least four of eight commitment and motivation factors	Strong support
Tangible support reduction	at least three of ten tangible support factors reduced	Strong support
Criticality of intelligence	at least one of two intelligence factors	Strong support
Flexibility and adaptability	the single flexibility and adaptability factor	Strong support

Broader Findings

Chapter Four described and presented our tests of 24 concepts for COIN. This chapter describes and presents the results from other analyses. We begin by discussing the *patterns of relationships* between multiple factors and the outcomes of the cases and present three analyses. First, with so many of the concepts identified in the previous chapter receiving strong support, we try to preliminarily identify which patterns of factors occur most often in COIN wins. Our findings show that the balance of good versus bad COIN practices discriminates the wins from the losses in all 59 core cases, and we present a scorecard based on this finding. Second, we return to the concepts from the previous chapter and try to tease out which of supported concepts are most essential to success. Using a method called qualitative comparative analysis, we ask which of the 18 supported concepts for COIN from the last chapter are the most causally central. This analysis finds that every winning COIN force always implemented an approach that included four of these concepts and the COIN force never lost in cases in which at least one of three concepts were implemented. This allows us to prioritize several of the concepts as critical to success. Third, we make several additional observations about hypothesized patterns in the data, including some observations about the relative importance of the quality versus quantity of COIN forces and about the broader patterns of outcomes in the intermediate phases of the 59 core cases. The findings reveal that quality should be prioritized over quantity and that poor beginnings do not necessarily lead to poor outcomes.

The chapter then turns to analyses of different outcomes, turning away from an examination of factors and concepts correlated with who won or lost the case and instead focusing on other properties of the case: first, the duration of the case and, second, the durability of the outcome—that is, the length of the postconflict peace interval.

Scorecard: Balance of Good Versus Bad Practices

In addition to the factors (listed in Chapter Four) that we selected to represent each concept and evaluated for each phase of each case, we identified many other factors to evaluate for each phase of each case to test additional hypotheses and to use as control variables. All 289 factors recorded for each case are listed in Appendix E. Further discussion on the selection and refinement of these factors can be found in Appendix A, in the section “Factor Generation, Evaluation, and Scoring.”

Preliminary exploratory analyses of the relationship of each factor with case outcomes, coupled with the analyses examining the factor stacks used to test the various concepts for COIN (presented in the previous chapter), revealed a trend: Most concepts and factors that common sense dictated would have a positive relationship to COIN victories did; most factors that common sense suggested would lead to poor COIN outcomes by and large did so. Looking carefully at the patterns of factors present and absent in each case revealed something very interesting: Every case won by the COIN force featured many factors that are part of demonstrably positive COIN practices or approaches and predominantly did not include detractive COIN factors; in instances in which the COIN force lost, this was never the case.

To confirm this preliminary observation, we gathered individual factors and factor stacks that had strong *a priori* grounding as good or bad COIN practices or that had strong bivariate relationships with case outcomes, either strong positive relationships or strong negative relationships. We then took these factors or factor stacks and compiled them into 15 good COIN practices and 11 bad COIN practices. In doing so, we repeated a process we had first followed in the original

Victory Has a Thousand Fathers research.¹ For details on how we produced the scorecard from the data on the 59 core cases and how it differs from the one produced for the original 30 cases, see the discussion in Appendix D.

The good COIN practices or factors are as follows:

- The COIN force realized at least two strategic communication factors (factor list revised).
- The COIN force reduced at least three tangible support factors.
- The government realized at least one government legitimacy factor (factor list revised).
- Government corruption was reduced/good governance increased since the onset of the conflict.
- The COIN force realized at least one intelligence factor.
- The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas (COIN force overmatch).
- Unity of effort/unity of command was maintained.
- The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force.
- The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in area of conflict.
- There were short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform in area of conflict that was controlled or claimed by the COIN force.
- The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported/favored the COIN force.
- The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas.
- Government/COIN reconstruction or development sought or achieved improvements that were substantially above the historical baseline.
- The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control.
- Perception of security was created or maintained among populations in the area that the COIN force claimed to control.

¹ See Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b.

The bad COIN practices or factors are as follows:

- The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression.
- There was corrupt and arbitrary personalistic government rule.
- Host-nation elites had perverse incentives to continue conflict.
- An external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of the insurgents.
- The host nation was economically dependent on external supporters.
- The fighting was primarily initiated by the insurgents.
- The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.
- The COIN force engaged in more coercion/intimidation than the insurgents.
- The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.
- The COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment.
- The COIN force and government had different goals/levels of commitment.

Taking the balance of the sum of good factors minus the sum of bad factors for each case provided a striking result: For all 59 core cases, all of the cases in which the COIN force won have a positive balance of good versus bad practices, while for all cases in which the COIN force lost, the balance is negative. (See Table 5.1; the individual scores for each case can be found in Appendix G.) What is especially revealing is that the score for the highest-scoring loss is -1 , while the score for the lowest-scoring win is 2 . This is an empirical separation of three—a gap that exposes wins and losses as fundamentally differentiated by these criteria.

In the 59 core cases, every case in which the COIN force had more of the listed good factors/practices than bad factors/practices won. This list of 15 good and 11 bad factors is perfectly able to discriminate the 59 core cases into wins and losses, without any further information and without exception.

Table 5.1
Balance of Good COIN Practices Minus
Bad COIN Practices and Case Outcomes
for 59 Core Cases

Score	COIN Losses	COIN Wins
-11	1	0
-9	2	0
-8	2	0
-7	4	0
-6	3	0
-5	2	0
-4	4	0
-3	5	0
-2	4	0
-1	4	0
2	0	2
3	0	3
4	0	2
5	0	3
6	0	3
7	0	1
8	0	1
9	0	1
10	0	4
11	0	2
12	0	2
13	0	3
15	0	1

Every Insurgency May Be Unique, but Not at This Level of Analysis

This “without exception” is particularly important, given the regular admonition that “every insurgency is unique,” and, thus, every COIN campaign must be unique.² This is even more remarkable given that many of the conventional explanations of the outcomes of these cases rely on a narrative of exceptionality—that is, they list one or more distinctive or exceptional aspects of the case’s history that are critical to understanding the outcome. For example, the narrative of Turkey’s 1999 triumph over the PKK indicates that victory largely hinged on the capture of the PKK’s leader, Abdullah Öcalan, and willful errors he had made in not ensuring succession for the insurgent group. Narrative accounts might further mention Turkey’s failure to address the legitimate grievances of the Kurdish population and how its heavy-handed and repressive tactics alienated the population in the area of conflict. What might be given less explanatory emphasis in the narrative is the host of good COIN practices that the Turks slowly added to their approach in the later phases of the conflict. Regardless of whether the Turks would have defeated the PKK in 1999 had they not captured Öcalan, they did defeat the PKK, and at that point in the conflict, they did have a substantially positive balance of good versus bad COIN practices. (The scorecard scores for Turkey were eight good factors minus two bad factors, for a total score of six.) After removing the class exceptions for the tide-of-history cases and the one case with an ambiguous outcome (see Chapter Three), no exceptions are required.

So, every insurgency may be unique, but not so much that it matters at this level of analysis.³ Our data show that, regardless of distinctiveness in the narrative and without exception, COIN forces that suc-

² Each of the following documents contains the quotation “every insurgency is unique”: Felter, 2006; Nagl, 2005; Giampietri and Stone, 2004; Millen, 2005; Norton, 1997; Hoffman, 2007; Harrill, 2008; and Gray, 2007. Also see Appendix C.

³ Where the distinctive features and characteristics of individual insurgencies most certainly *do* matter is in actual efforts to implement concepts and practices on the ground. Our findings do not suggest a “one-size-fits-all” approach to COIN at the execution level; rather, these findings suggest that there is a finite set of good practices that a COIN force should always aspire to realize, but how a COIN force actually does those things in any given operation will vary depending on the context.

cessfully implement preponderantly more good practices than bad win, and those that do not lose.

Where we allow that every insurgency *is* unique is in the details of the specific case, including the strategy and actions of the insurgents. These details are highly context-specific. They do not appear to cause variation in the factors that must be implemented to defeat an insurgency, but they do appear to affect how hard it is to do those things. If one reviews the lists of good and bad practices and factors, they are all phrased in such a way as to reflect accomplishment, not attempts. (When we brief these findings, we explain that, on this scorecard, there is no “A for effort.”) How difficult it is to do each of these things, how much effort is required, will be (uniquely?) determined specifically by the context of a conflict.

Consider this extended example drawn from the Angola (UNITA) case. In first phase of the conflict (1975–1991), both the COIN force and the insurgents were backed by outside troops, as Cuban soldiers fought alongside their comrades from the MPLA and South African commandos worked alongside UNITA insurgents. MPLA COIN forces had just finished fighting in a 13-year war of independence to oust the Portuguese from the country, so its fighters resorted to all means available in the first phase of the subsequent civil war, with little attention to strategy or human consequences. Indeed, in Phase I, the COIN forces employed seven of the 11 “bad” practices listed on the COIN scorecard.

Toward the end of Phase I and the beginning of Phase II, external troops were (mostly) removed from the battlefield, although South Africa continued to provide low-level support to the insurgents. Recognizing the need for a change in strategy, the COIN force spent most of Phase II (1992–1997) gradually attenuating the insurgency through rounds of cease-fires, amnesties, elections, and reforms. The DDR processes that accompanied the Bicesse and Lusaka agreements deprived the insurgents of their top military leaders. Concurrently, the government used profits obtained through the sale of diamonds and oil to provide much-needed services to the population in an attempt to woo civilians and combatants alike. As a result of these efforts, by the end

of Phase II, the COIN force could boast an overall scorecard score of 7, a significant change from the -4 total of the first phase.

In Phase III (1998–2002), the Angolan government and COIN force continued their strategy of allowing UNITA fighters and the insurgency’s mercurial leader, Jonas Savimbi, to keep making mistakes while gradually improving the quality and quantity of the state security forces. UNITA neglected popular support and politics, making it much easier for the government to make progress in this area when it chose to do so. It made particular headway when it organized a political party of insurgent defectors, known as UNITA-Renovada.

The government’s strategy resulted in the implementation of numerous “good” COIN practices from the scorecard, bringing the overall score for the final phase to 10. During this phase, the COIN force’s strategy led it to explicitly focus on a number of the scorecard practices, including establishing and expanding secure areas, reducing tangible support to the insurgents, realizing factors related to government legitimacy, and creating and maintaining the perception of security among populations in the areas under government control.

The improvements in the Angolan COIN force’s scorecard scores were not inevitable and were not the result of a scorekeeping exercise or the application of a checklist. They resulted from the evolution of a sound strategy, effectively executed. It just so happens that the effective Angolan COIN strategy realized a positive balance of scorecard factors, as did every other winning COIN strategy since WWII. The COIN scorecard *is not* (nor is it intended to be) a substitute for strategy or for a nuanced understanding of the distinctive features of a given context and insurgency. It *is* a historically derived way to make a diagnostic assessment of whether or not a strategy and its implementation have produced a positive balance of factors that have led to success elsewhere.

Factors Not in the Scorecard

Perhaps of almost as much interest as the factors included in the scorecard are the factors that are *not* included in the scorecard. There is at least as much art as there is science in exactly which factors made the scorecard. Where many factors had a strong correlation with out-

come but were also strongly correlated with each other, only one was included: the one that either best represented that cluster of factors, or perhaps the one that was the most intuitive to measure. The fact remains, however, that a simple scorecard of 15 good factors and 11 bad factors is able to perfectly discriminate the 59 core comparative cases of insurgency from 1944 to 2010 into wins and losses without needing to make reference to any of the following factors:

- The COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance.
- The primary COIN force was an external actor at any point during the conflict.
- Terrain played a major role in the conflict.
- It was an Islamic insurgency.
- It was a communist insurgency
- Grievances leading to the initial insurgency were substantially resolved
- COIN force or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence.

It is hypothesized in the broader discussions of COIN that each of these factors has a significant impact on insurgency outcomes. In fact, in the individual case narratives, several of these factors play prominent roles. However, none of them is so definitive that we could not discriminate the wins from the losses without it. None is essential to COIN success (as some of these factors, such as air power, have been posited to be), and none is a certain condemnation to COIN failure.

The full scorecard, with the individual factors that must be assessed to complete the scorecard (spelling out the five strategic communication factors to determine whether at least two are present, for example), appears in Appendix F. Again, while not meant as a checklist or recipe book for an insurgency (it is atheoretical and does not contain or imply a specific strategy), the scorecard should be a useful diagnostic tool to assess whether a given COIN strategy within a given context is on the right track and to help identify some issues that may not be sufficiently addressed by a given strategy, or shortcomings in implementation.

Which Supported COIN Concepts Are Most Essential? Qualitative Comparative Analysis

The evidentiary support offered to 17 of the 24 COIN concepts presented in Chapter Four is already a useful finding, but it does little to narrow down priorities. Which of the host of good COIN concepts is most critical, or most important? To answer this question, we employed sociologist Charles Ragin's qualitative comparative analysis (QCA).⁴

QCA is particularly well suited to this application because it is designed to assess configurations of case similarities and differences using simple, logical rules. These rules run parallel to those used by researchers who conduct small-n studies (e.g., case studies with single-digit numbers of cases), yet this method makes it possible to address a much larger number of cases.⁵ Using computer algorithms first developed for the simplification of switching circuits, researchers are able to compare a large number of cases as configurations—many more than they could possibly “hold in their heads” using traditional case-oriented narrative comparative methods. As such, researchers are compelled to be explicit about outcomes of interest and proposed causal relations. Further, the output of the QCA process is the reduction of patterns of factors to the minimum set sufficient to explain all of the observed outcomes. These minimally sufficient patterns (called “prime implicants”) tell us which of the identified COIN concepts are most essential to success in COIN. In other words, this is a more sophisticated way to do what the scorecard discussed earlier in this chapter

⁴ Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1987.

⁵ This technique really shines in the “medium-n” methodological space. For small-n case studies (single digits), a researcher can make an effective comparison while holding all the relevant comparative detail in his or her head. For large-n studies, the full power of statistics and statistical inference becomes available. In the medium-n space (any number of cases greater than what one can compare holistically “in the head” and fewer the threshold for statistical inference), a technique—such as this one—that structures the data so as to point out anomalies and differences in patterns between the cases for further scrutiny is ideal. For a more complete discussion, see Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill, and Terrance Savitsky, “Between Large-N and Small-N Analyses: Historical Comparison of Thirty Insurgency Case Studies,” *Historical Methods*, forthcoming.

ended up doing: Identify a set of factors that will perfectly discriminate the cases into wins and losses, only do it using as few factors as possible. For a more detailed methodological discussion of QCA, see the section “Charles Ragin’s Qualitative Comparative Analysis” in Appendix A.

The QCA conducted as part of the *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* analysis was inconclusive; in the original 30 cases, the eight COIN winners all had so many of the supported concepts that it was impossible to prioritize (hence the title of that study and the core finding, which remains valid, that “good COIN practices run in packs”). The current study does better, in part because there are more cases (59 core cases, of which 28 were wins), and in part because more of those cases are more marginal wins—that is, the COIN force managed to prevail with fewer good practices in place. These marginal wins help winnow out which of the concepts and practices are critical and which are just positively correlated with success. For further discussion of the value of these marginal cases, see Appendix B.

QCA revealed a single simple set of prime implicants, requiring just two concept factor stacks:

- tangible support reduction
- commitment and motivation.

Every case in which both factors were present was a COIN win, and every case in which one or both was absent was a COIN loss. In other words, these two factors constitute a scorecard score of 2; any case with a score of 2 is a win, and any case with a score of 1 or 0 is a loss.

Further iterations of QCA revealed six factor stacks that routinely contributed to other possible prime implicant sets. In the 59 core cases, every winning case implemented these four concepts, and no losing case had all four of them (so, together they are prime implicants, perfectly discriminating the cases by outcome):

- commitment and motivation
- tangible support reduction
- flexibility and adaptability

- at least two of the following: unity of effort, initiative, and intelligence.

A discussion and (fairly technical) presentation of this analysis is presented in Appendix B. *Briefly, this finding leads us to prioritize commitment and motivation, tangible support reduction, and flexibility and adaptability as critical or essential COIN concepts.* All successful COIN campaigns in the 59 core cases between 1944 and 2010 implemented all three of these concepts, and no losing COIN force in that span succeeded in doing all three. The QCA, the scorecard, and the narrative analyses suggest that a COIN force that wishes to succeed should implement other good practices, too, but future COIN forces should prioritize commitment, tangible support, and adaptability.

Additional Observations

Before turning to outcomes of interest other than which side won the conflict, there are a few additional observational odds and ends to report. Choosing where to draw the line with such additional observations is difficult; these data ended up being so rich, analytically (71 cases, broken into a total of 204 phases, and each scored on 289 factors, for a total of over 58,000 individual cells of data, in addition to the case narratives), that there are always additional observations to be drawn from them. Here, we have restricted ourselves to additional observations in three categories: observations that are relevant to questions about external actors on the insurgent side, those relevant to the COIN force mix (including quality versus quantity), and a few observations about results from the intermediate phases of cases rather than just the decisive phases. Each is discussed in turn.

External Actors on the Insurgent Side

The preliminary observations at the end of Chapter Three noted that COIN forces consisting of or supported by external actors do not lose insurgencies any more frequently than those without such support. This observation was confirmed by the COIN scorecard, discussed earlier

in this chapter, which showed that the COIN force's status as an external actor was one of the factors *not* needed to discriminate cases into wins and losses. What about cases in which the *insurgents* have external supporters? As one would surmise, such support is bad news from the perspective of the government. In the case of Kosovo, this bad news was delivered to the Serbs in the form of NATO sorties flown in support of the insurgents, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). While one can never say for certain, it is highly unlikely that the KLA would have been able to defeat the Serbs without such significant external support. Jeffrey Record reinforces this point more broadly, noting that "external assistance is no guarantee of insurgent success, but there are few if any examples of unassisted insurgent victories against determined and resourceful governments."⁶

Though not included in the scorecard because of high correlation with tangible support, continuing strong support to the insurgents from a strong external source is strongly correlated with COIN loss. In fact, every case in which a major external power supported the insurgents and was not balanced by a major external power supporting the COIN force ended up being an insurgent win and a COIN loss (this occurred seven times in the 59 core cases). The news gets even worse if the insurgents' external support includes troops. In 14 cases, external professional military forces fought on behalf of the insurgents in the decisive phase of the conflict; in 13 of those 14 cases, the COIN force lost, even if it too had external professional forces fighting on its side. In several cases around the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, including Georgia/Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh, Soviet military forces propelled the insurgents to victory by fighting against the incumbent governments. Clearly, part of reducing the tangible support to the insurgents is the imperative to find a way to curtail both external support and whatever support is being provided by indigenous populations.

Immediately after WWII, governments were more likely than insurgents to receive external support. This trend was reversed once

⁶ Jeffrey Record, "External Assistance: Enabler of Insurgent Success," *Parameters*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Fall 2006b, p. 36.

the Cold War began in earnest, and then it switched again during the 1980s, and governments were once again more likely than insurgents to receive external support, especially as the Cold War came to an end.⁷

COIN Forces: Quality Versus Quantity and Force Mix

A frequent topic in the literature on COIN concerns the appropriate force mix for COIN forces, variously questioning the right balance between law-enforcement and military forces, between conventional forces and SOF, indigenous and foreign forces, and so on. Most of our data are not well suited to these types of questions, as the concept and scorecard factors are either about how something is done (for example, factor 39, “COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict”) or whether or not something is accomplished (for example, factor 43, “No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to the COIN force”) rather than about what part of the COIN force accomplished it, or even what COIN force elements were available. Some of the factors we collected, however, do speak to this issue.

For example, factor 155 scored whether or not the COIN force included significant numbers of police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional personnel. This factor was present in 44 of the 59 core cases, with no correlation with outcome. The individual case narratives suggested that this was often because such forces were inadequately armed or trained. In the 23 cases in which such forces were present and that we evaluated as being effective (factor 155a), the COIN force won 69 percent of the time. Factor 162 asked whether COIN forces employed “counter-gangs,” “scouts,” or “ferret forces” against the insurgents. The presence of such forces was rare but impressively effective: In all seven of the cases in which they were present in the decisive phase, the COIN force won. In the case of South Africa, insurgent defectors known as *askaris* (Swahili for “fighters”) were recruited and used in pseudo-operations against their erstwhile comrades, a model that had

⁷ Seth G. Jones and Patrick B. Johnston, “The Future of Insurgency,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2013, p. 9.

worked well with the Selous Scouts in neighboring Rhodesia.⁸ To great effect, these pseudo-operations involved *askaris* leading unsuspecting African National Congress (ANC) insurgents back into South Africa, where they would be ambushed, abducted, or killed by the South African security forces. The *askaris* were able to provide the COIN force with extremely valuable intelligence on the current state of the insurgency, which was then used to plan further operations.

Another issue that comes up in the COIN literature concerns the quality versus quantity of COIN forces, especially in discussions about building the capacity of a partner nation that is facing an insurgency. This question is quite relevant in that, across all 71 cases, no COIN force that was unable to overmatch the insurgents and force them to fight as guerrillas by the decisive phase of the conflict won. Being able to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas clearly requires both a certain quantity and a certain quality of COIN forces, and no distinction is made between the two in the factors we collected.

Detailed examination of the narratives reveals two paths to transitioning from not being able to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas to being able to do so. The first is diminishing the insurgents' ability to field and sustain conventional forces, usually by convincing or coercing external supporters to constrain their support. The second is facing the insurgents with sufficient numbers of better-quality troops, either external actor troops or indigenous troops with armament, training, and/or motivation or morale that had improved from the baseline. Interrogating the narratives regarding quality versus quantity revealed that, in every case in which it mattered, COIN force quality appears to have been more important than quantity.⁹ The oft-quoted aphorism

⁸ Kevin A. O'Brien, "Counter-Intelligence for Counter-Revolutionary Warfare: The South African Police Security Branch, 1979–1990," *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 16, No. 3, September 2001, pp. 37–41.

⁹ There were nine cases that were COIN wins in which COIN forces were unable to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas in an early phase but able to do so by the end:

- Oman: British forces got involved, dramatically increasing the quality of the COIN force.
- Oman (Dhofar Rebellion): The British got involved, improving quality, but indigenous forces increased in both size and quality.

that “quantity has a quality all its own” is true to the extent that too small a force will not be able to accomplish the mission. Quantity and quality must be balanced to some extent, but quantity is not a substitute for quality; the terminal phase of the Vietnam conflict is a clear testament to that.

Phase Outcomes

To accurately capture important changes during the course of the insurgencies studied here, we broke each case into between two and five phases. Details of this process are described in Appendix A in the section “Phased Data.” While breaking the cases into phases was useful and beneficial to the overall analysis, analyzing individual phases is problematic and minimally useful for a number of reasons. Paramount among them: We are interested in case outcomes, not phase outcomes. Understanding how to win a phase pales in comparison to understanding how to win a case, especially—as occurred repeatedly—if the COIN force managed to win a phase on the way to losing a case.

Where relevant to specific concepts, results from the analysis of the intermediate phases are presented with the concepts in Chapter Four. Our analysis of the phased data revealed a further important finding: Patterns of phase outcomes en route to wins or losses reveal success or failure in early phases, but these wins and losses do not preclude losing or winning the case. In other words, poor begin-

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- Jordan: The withdrawal of external support to insurgents reduced the COIN force’s relative quality.
 - Philippines (MNLF): Insurgent capabilities were reduced as a result of internal fractionalization.
 - Angola (UNITA): COIN forces increased in quality due to the addition of external forces.
 - Sri Lanka: Indigenous COIN forces increased in quality, especially with the receipt of updated Chinese equipment.
 - El Salvador: Indigenous COIN forces improved dramatically in quality under U.S. tutelage.
 - Sierra Leone: COIN force quality increased when the British and UNAMSIL became the primary COIN forces.
 - Croatia: COIN force quality increased under the tutelage of U.S. advisers.

nings do not necessary lead to poor ends, and good starts do not always carry through to the end of the conflict.

With each of 71 cases having between two and five phases, there are a total of 204 phases in our data set. Each case has a single decisive phase—that is, 71 of the 204 phases were decisive phases. The remaining 133 phases are initial or intermediate phases and illustrate the dynamic relationship between the outcomes of intermediate phases and the ultimate case outcomes. (See Table 5.2.)

Table 5.2 reveals that in more than half of the intermediate phases (32 of 58) en route to COIN wins at the case level, the insurgents held the upper hand. Similarly, in just under half (37 of 75) of intermediate phases in cases in which the COIN force ultimately lost, the COIN force held the upper hand.

Of the 71 cases, 22 (nine COIN wins and 13 COIN losses) had phase outcomes that all matched the ultimate case outcome. In the other 49 cases, the side that ultimately lost the case had the upper hand in at least one phase. This is continued strong support for one of the key findings from *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*: “Poor beginnings don’t necessarily lead to poor ends.”¹⁰

We now turn to discussions of different outcomes of interest, beginning with the analysis of factors related to the duration of insurgencies.

Table 5.2
Phase Outcome Versus Case Outcome for
133 Intermediate Phases

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Phase outcome	Win	37	26
	Loss	38	32

¹⁰ Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xxiii.

Sequence

Related to the phase outcomes and the fact that historically poor beginnings have not necessitated poor ends are questions regarding the sequencing of positive developments. The COIN scorecard identifies a set of factors that are present by the end of successful counterinsurgencies, and the tests of concepts in Chapter Four show which concepts are correlated with success, but, given that good COIN practices run in packs, which concepts or factors, if any, must be implemented prior to the implementation of other concepts? In short, is there a requisite sequence of good COIN practices? Although our data were not structured to address this question (we scored factors as present or absent during a phase and do not report the factors' precise timing or sequence of addition), we can still speak to this issue in terms of whether important concepts were implemented in early phases, middle phases, or later phases in successful cases.

First, the 28 COIN wins do reveal that good practices accumulate over time. Given that all 28 wins had a scorecard score of at least 2 by the decisive phase, almost all 28 had scorecard scores that increased monotonically (that is, only went up) from the early phases through the conclusion. This was not the case for losing cases. Many of these cases saw a scorecard peak in an intermediate phase, which fell off dramatically toward the end of the case (Vietnam being the strongest example).

Further, we were able to identify several factors or concepts whose appearance was strongly correlated with wins, usually occurring in early phases of those winning cases:

- commitment and motivation (always present prior to the decisive phase in 26 of 28 wins)
- COIN force of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas (always present prior to the decisive phase in 22 of 28 wins)
- flexibility and adaptability (always present prior to the decisive phase in 18 of 28 wins)
- insurgents not superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated (present in 27 wins prior to the decisive phase in 17 cases).

The case narratives confirm that these factors are foundational for other positive factors: You cannot get down to the serious business of COIN until you can overmatch the insurgents conventionally, and to make any headway in COIN, the government and COIN force must be committed to defeating the insurgency. Note that several COIN forces that ultimately prevailed were *not* initially able to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas. Fully nine cases were COIN wins in which the COIN force did not initially overmatch the insurgents: Oman (Imamate Uprising), Oman (Dhofar Rebellion), Jordan, Philippines (MNLF), Angola (UNITA), Sri Lanka, El Salvador, Sierra Leone, and Croatia. These countries achieved overmatch by one of two routes: diminishing the insurgents' ability to field conventional forces, usually by convincing or coercing external supporters to reduce support, or by facing the insurgents with higher-quality troops, usually an external actor's troops but sometimes indigenous troops with better armament, training, and morale than at the outset, as was the case with the Sri Lankan armed forces fighting against the LTTE.

From this sequential baseline, we observed several factors that were usually present in wins by the end of the case but were usually added to the COIN effort before the decisive phase. These intermediate sequential factors are

- intelligence (present in 21 wins, appearing before the decisive phase in ten of them)
- popular support (present in 16 wins, appearing before the decisive phase in 11 of them)
- government legitimacy (present in 17 wins, appearing before the decisive phase in 14 of them).

Again, the case narratives confirm that these factors are logical predecessors to many of the positive factors that subsequently figure into winning cases.

Finally, we identified several factors or concepts that, while common in wins, rarely occurred until the decisive phase of the case:

- implementing the beat-cop concept (occurred in 15 cases, but not consistently until the decisive phase of 11)

- having the initiative (occurred in 21 cases, but not until the decisive phase for 15 of them)
- strategic communication (occurred in 11 cases, but not consistently until the decisive phase for nine of them)
- perception of security created or maintained (occurred in 14 cases, but not until the decisive phase for ten of them).

These findings clearly suggest that some concepts or factors logically precede and are perhaps prerequisite for other concepts or factors (such as the ability to overmatch the insurgents and demonstrating a commitment to their defeat). The narratives further suggest that some concepts or factors are more difficult to achieve, and an entire campaign's worth of effort may not bear fruit until near the resolution of the conflict (such as strategic communication and being able to create a perception of security). This situation proved true in Sierra Leone, among other cases.

Duration of Insurgencies

How long do insurgencies last, and what factors or practices can help shorten such conflicts? One of the new factors added to this study was the duration of each phase of each case in months, which supports observations about the durations of insurgencies and analyses with a temporal component, such as survival analysis (methodological details are presented in Appendix A).

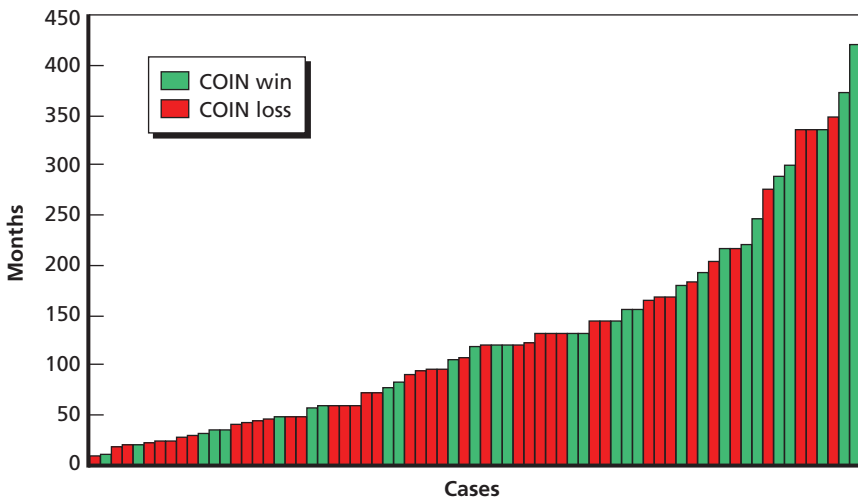
Durations of insurgencies vary widely. In the 71 cases examined here, the shortest insurgency was roughly nine months long (Bangladesh, 1971), while the longest took just over 35 years (Guatemala, 1960–1996). The average (mean) duration of the 71 cases was 128 months (10.6 years), while the median duration (influenced less by the few extremely long cases) was 118 months (9.8 years).¹¹

¹¹ The mean duration of all cases was 128.4 months, pulled higher than the median by the few extremely long cases. The standard deviation for that mean is 99.3 months due to the extreme variation in case durations, which ranged from three months to 420 months (35 years).

COIN wins took (on average) slightly longer than losses.¹² The median duration of a COIN win was 132 months; the media duration of a COIN loss was 72 months.¹³ Figure 5.1 shows each case and its duration in months, sorted shortest to longest.

Although wins took longer on average, it is clear from Figure 5.1 that outcome is not the principal determinant of length. The case narratives suggest that durations vary based on a host of factors, includ-

Figure 5.1
Durations of 71 Insurgencies



RAND RR291/1-5.1

¹² The mean duration of a COIN win was 152.2 months, with a standard deviation of 109.9 months; the mean duration of a COIN loss was 112 months, with a standard deviation of 89 months.

¹³ If we were to include insurgencies still ongoing as of this writing, some much longer cases would be added to these calculations. These would include the ongoing insurgency in Burma, which dates back to 1948; the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Colombianas (FARC), or the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, which began its campaign in 1963; and the Naxalite insurgency in India, active since 1980. Such inclusions would increase the maximum case length (744 months in 2010, and still going), and the average (mean) would go up, pulled by the addition of extreme values. The median would likely change little, being less vulnerable to extreme values and further insulated by the addition of ongoing cases that have not been going on all that long—the insurgencies in Afghanistan and South Thailand, for example.

ing the intensity of the fighting, the extent of popular support for the insurgents, the participation of an external actor in support of one or both sides, efforts by the government to redress grievances, and the various COIN concepts employed. Rather than relying on anecdotes from individual cases, we sought to test the impact of the presence of various factors and practices on duration across the cases. We chose to do so using survival analysis.

Survival analysis (methodological details in Appendix A) is so named for its use in epidemiology, studying the impact of various treatments or baseline health conditions on survival times for grievously ill patients (how long the patient survived, hence, survival analysis). The technique can be generalized to any inquiry in which the dependent variable of interest is time to event. In our analysis, the event is not the death of a patient but the end of an insurgency. Survival analysis allows the comparison of the survival times (or, in our analysis, insurgency durations) of groups of patients (cases) with and without certain factors or sets of factors. Importantly, it allows for such comparisons even when the factors of interest change over time—for example, allowing us to consider how the adoption of a particular COIN practice several years into an insurgency can reduce the duration of the remainder of the case. These comparisons are presented as “hazard ratios” and describe the relative risk of experiencing the event (the end of an insurgency) while the factor is present against cases (or periods of cases) in which it is not. A hazard ratio equal to 1 indicates no difference in duration in the presence or absence of the factor. A hazard ratio above 1 indicates higher hazard of the event (in this case, a great probability of the insurgency ending sooner, which is a positive thing). If the hazard ratio is less than 1, that indicates a reduced hazard, or something likely to prolong the insurgency.

To identify factors and implemented concepts that have consistently affected the duration of insurgencies, we reviewed all factors and factor stacks, identifying those that could plausibly affect duration. We then conducted survival analyses of the impact of each of these factors individually over the 28 wins from the 59 core cases. (Details of the factor selection and the choice of subsample can be found in Appendix C, along with detailed results from the survival analyses.)

Survival analyses revealed four COIN concepts and three separate factors that, when present, were correlated with reduced insurgency durations in the 28 COIN wins.¹⁴ The four concepts were

- tangible support reduction
- border control
- strategic communication
- beat cop.

The three additional factors were

- The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas.
- COIN or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances.
- Significant government reforms since onset of conflict.

These results highlight several factors and concepts that have already been strongly endorsed by other portions of the analysis as strong correlates for COIN success. Not only do these practices, when in place, improve the prospects for defeating the insurgency, but they are also correlated with hastening that defeat.

To complete our inquiries regarding duration, we also sought factors whose presence was correlated with prolonging insurgencies. The analysis revealed four that were statistically significant:

- Terrain allowed insurgents to avoid/overcome COIN force fire-power or vehicle advantages.
- The government maintained weak policing capacity and infra-structural power.
- Government sponsorship or protection of unpopular economic and social arrangements or cultural institutions.
- Government repression and/or exclusion of significant societal groups from state power or resources.

¹⁴ All seven were statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

None of these inclusions is particularly surprising, but our findings do suggest noteworthy cautions.

Scorecard and Duration

As noted earlier, the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* study also produced a scorecard with similar virtues. When we briefed the results from that study, a question that often came up was, “So, you’ve shown me the things I need to do in order to beat an insurgency, but *how long do I have to do them?*” The original study, lacking temporal data, had no answer beyond “as long as it takes,” which was not particularly satisfying. One of the goals of this expanded effort was to find a better answer to that question.

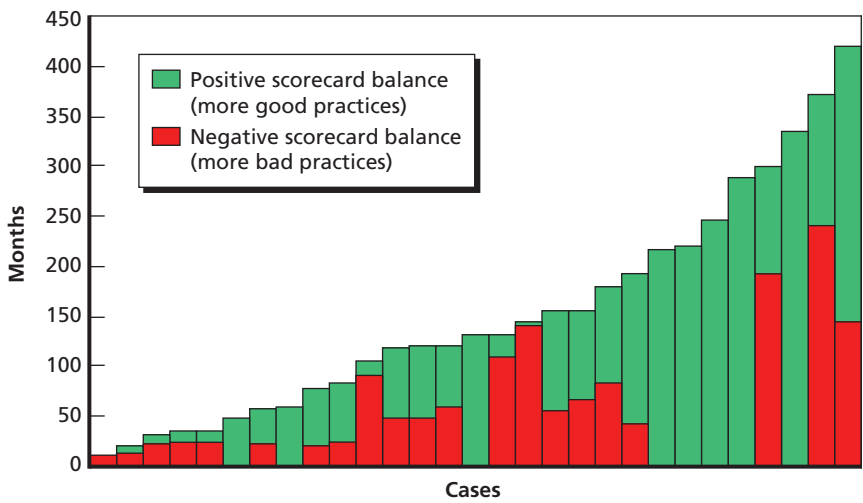
So, how long does a COIN force have to maintain a positive scorecard score before the conflict ends? For the cases in which the COIN force won, the median conflict duration (as noted earlier) was 132 months (11 years). By the end of the conflicts, all COIN wins had a scorecard score of at least 2. The median time from the beginning of the first phase in a conflict in which the COIN force achieved a scorecard score of 2 or more until the end of that conflict was 69 months (5.75 years).¹⁵ So, the answer to the question is, on average, just under six years. Figure 5.2 shows the durations of the winning cases, with the time each case spent with a score below 2 depicted in red and the time each spent with a score of 2 or higher depicted in green. The figure shows that there is considerable variation in how long each of these COIN forces maintained a good scorecard score before securing its victory.¹⁶ Some went quite a while without a good scorecard score, then got a score above 2 fairly late and won soon after; others had strong positive scorecard scores for the duration of a relatively lengthy conflict.

In a briefing of preliminary study results, which included Figure 5.2, one attendee raised a question about the transition from

¹⁵ Another way to phrase this to correctly interpret median duration is as follows: 50 percent of insurgencies were defeated within just under six years of the government/COIN force first achieving a scorecard score of 2 or better.

¹⁶ This variation can be quantified: While the median was 69 months, the mean was 101 months, with a standard deviation of 95 months.

Figure 5.2
Duration of Winning Cases with Time with Good and Bad Scorecard Scores



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“red to green.” Is there anything interesting to be learned from the ways in which individual successful COIN forces progressed from having more poor than good factors to having more good than bad? We examined the 20 winning cases with scorecard scores that went from negative to positive over the course of the case (the others all “ran the table,” with a positive balance throughout) to answer that question. Each of the 20 cases roughly followed one of five paths to transition from negative scores to positive scores:

1. There was significant development or revamping of the COIN force, along with a significant change in strategy (happened in nine cases).
2. The COIN force had an experience-based progression from slightly less effective COIN practices to more effective COIN practices (four cases, most of which started with relatively high red scores [e.g., -1 or 0] and progressed to only relatively modest positive scores [2 , 3 , or 4]).

3. An external actor held off the insurgents (or just helped indigenous forces do so) while supporting improvements in indigenous COIN forces (four cases).
4. An external actor entered and took over the primary counterinsurgent role, doing so effectively (two cases).
5. Insurgent errors, coupled with the withdrawal of external support to the insurgents, allowed the COIN force to “back into” a better COIN scorecard score without really changing what it was doing (one case).

Taken together, these paths to transition suggest that COIN forces that struggle and have poor scorecard scores should seek to develop and improve their forces and should not be afraid to consider significant strategic changes if what they are doing is not working, even if they require the help of an external supporter. Although the fourth and fifth paths have happened historically and might happen again, they are not a deficient COIN force's best bet.

Peace Intervals and Win Durability

Another observation from the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* study was that some countries were repeatedly plagued by insurgencies. Questions were left open about these “serial” insurgencies. Ideally, a government facing an insurgency would seek ways to not only defeat that insurgency but to reduce the prospects for a similar insurgency in the future. The resilience or durability of an insurgency's outcome can be thought of in terms of the peace interval—the amount of time between the end of the first conflict and the start of the next (if there is a next). We approached this problem in two ways: first, with survival analysis and, second, with bivariate comparisons against holistically assessed win quality or win durability.

Of the 71 cases, 35 saw their peace interval ended by another internal conflict before the end of 2011. The average (mean) length of

these peace intervals was 7.33 years. The other 36 cases were still experiencing peace at the end of 2011.¹⁷

Preliminary analyses revealed that peace intervals following a COIN win tend to be longer than peace intervals following an insurgent win, and that different factors are correlated with length of the peace interval, depending on who won. Continuing the overall focus of this report on COIN practices, we sought to identify factors associated with extended peace intervals after COIN wins. We conducted two types of analyses: survival analyses and bivariate comparisons of holistic assessments of win durability with the COIN concepts. The key results are presented here, and more detailed results can be found in Appendix C.

Survival analysis revealed only three factors that had a statistically significant relationship with the length of peace intervals. Each had a hazard ratio indicating that peace intervals are between four and five times more likely to endure in the factor's presence than when it was absent. The three factors are as follows:

- There were significant government reforms during the conflict.
- There were significant ethical/professional/human rights–related military reforms during conflict.
- The conflict caused significant host-nation economic disruption.

The relationship between reform and durable peace is unsurprising, but it is slightly counterintuitive that economic disruption would be correlated with extending the peace interval. We believe that economic disruption can be viewed as being broadly representative of the intensity and extent of the conflict, as well as the cost of the conflict as experienced by the population in the country and as a proxy of sorts for general war-weariness. The implicit argument is that where a conflict has had a significant cost in lives and economic disruption, people will be more hesitant to rise up (or support such an uprising) again any time soon, thus increasing the peace interval.

¹⁷ In survival analysis terms, these cases are “right-censored”—that is, they had not experienced the event by the time data collection ended. For a discussion of right-censoring in survival analysis, see the section “Survival Analysis” in Appendix A.

The survival analyses offered only a few strongly correlated factors, in part because of a lack of statistical power driven by uncertainty: Many of the peace intervals have not yet ended. To generate additional results about the durability of wins, we sought to return to simple bivariate analysis of various factors or factor stacks against a simple outcome. To do this, we needed a simple bivariate outcome. So, for each case won by the COIN force, the case analysts were asked to score the resulting victory as durable or fragile (details in Appendix C). We then compared the bivariate relationships between the 24 concepts tested in Chapter Three and our holistic win durability assessment. Table 5.3 presents the summary results. Note that many of the concepts that are strong predictors of COIN success do little to discriminate win durability, as they are present in all or almost all wins, durable and fragile alike. It is worth noting that most of the concepts associated with win durability are oriented toward the motive-focused

Table 5.3
Summary of Concepts Correlated with Win Durability

Concept	Factor/Factor Stack	Correlation with Win Durability
Development	at least two of four development factors	Strong correlation
Pacification	at least two of six pacification factors	Strong correlation
Legitimacy (use of force)	at least four of six legitimate use of force factors	Modest correlation
Reform	at least four of five reform factors	Strong correlation
Democracy	at least one of three democracy factors	Modest correlation
Strategic communication	at least three of five strategic communication factors	Strong correlation
Field Manual 3-24 (<i>Counterinsurgency</i>)	at least four of nine FM 3-24 factors	Strong correlation
Clear, hold, and build	all three of clear, hold, and build	Strong correlation
"Boots on the ground"	at least three of six "boots on the ground" factors	Modest correlation
Criticality of intelligence	at least one of two intelligence factors	Strong correlation

end of the spectrum, such as development, legitimacy, reform, democracy, and strategic communication. It should come as no surprise that efforts that succeeded in reducing the motivation for participating in or supporting an insurgency diminished the prospects for similar support for a subsequent insurgency. Detailed breakdowns of each concept's factor stack and its relationship to win durability are presented in Appendix C.

Results for Motive-Focused, Iron Fist, and External-Actor Cases

This chapter presents results from some of the analyses in Chapters Four and Five for the iron fist versus motive-focused subpopulations and for the subpopulation of cases in which a major external actor provided COIN forces.

Iron Fist and Motive-Focused Subpopulations

Chapter Three described several subpopulations, including the division of the 59 core cases into 44 iron fist cases, in which COIN forces focused predominantly on kinetic action against active insurgents, and 15 motive-focused cases, in which the COIN forces' primary focus was on reducing motives for participation and support. Where the efforts were substantially balanced between the two, we considered the case to be motive-focused, so the motive-focused category (15 cases) contains both motive-focused and balanced cases.

The COIN Concepts and the Iron Fist and Motive-Focused Subpopulations

Data presented at the end of Chapter Three showed that iron fist COIN forces lose more often than motive-focused forces (27 of 44 iron fist cases were COIN losses, while only four of 15 motive-focused forces lost), though forces adhering to either paradigm can win. This leaves open the possibility that different factors or implemented concepts led to iron fist and motive-focused wins: Are there multiple, genuinely different paths to victory?

The short answer is no. The same factors that are correlated with iron fist wins and motive-focused wins are common to COIN wins in general; these factors just appear less frequently in iron fist wins, probably because COIN forces that follow an iron fist COIN theory are less likely to seek to implement many of the successful concepts.

In support of the subpopulation analyses, we re-ran all the concept-factor stack cross-tabulations for the 44 iron fist cases and the 15 motive-focused cases. While the exact percentages deviated slightly from those derived from the full data and presented in Chapter Four, almost all led to the same levels of support and matched across all three populations: the 59 core cases, the 44-case iron fist subset, and the 15-case motive-focused subset. Refer back to Table 4.33 for a summary of concepts and support.

What varied was the frequency with which these concepts were implemented. Six of the 17 strongly supported concepts were very rare in iron fist cases but were strongly correlated with success when they were: development (appeared in only five iron fist cases, all of which were wins), pacification (in nine iron fist cases, all of which were wins), legitimacy (government legitimacy appeared in 12 iron fist cases, eight of which were wins; legitimate use of force was present in only four iron fist cases, three of which were wins), strategic communication (only four iron fist cases, all of which were wins), beat cop (in only five iron fist cases, all of which were wins), and reform (in only three iron fist cases, all of which were wins).

Note that “crush them,” found to be a poor concept across the 59 core cases, remains a poor concept in iron fist cases. Most iron fist cases employed this concept (34 of 44), but *most iron fist cases were losses*.

For one concept, however, the iron fist findings differed from the motive-focused results: initiative. As shown in Table 6.1, in every motive-focused case in which the COIN force had the initiative (nine cases, 100 percent), it won; among the iron fist cases, however, in 23 cases in which the COIN force had the initiative, it won only 13 times (57 percent).

Recall that in the discussion of the initiative concept in Chapter Four (see Tables 4.16 and 4.17), that in the 59 core cases,

Table 6.1
Initiative Concept Implemented Versus Case Outcome for Motive-Focused and Iron Fist Cases

		Motive-Focused Cases		Iron Fist Cases	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win	COIN Loss	COIN Win
Fighting in phase initiated primarily by COIN force	Yes	0	9	10	13
	No	4	2	17	4

the correlation between initiative and outcome was fairly modest until intelligence was included; we found that taking the initiative based on good intelligence was very highly correlated with outcome. In Algeria’s campaign against the GIA, for example, the COIN force received substantial intelligence from the population (due, in part, to the population’s weariness with the GIA’s brutal tactics). Combined with the COIN force’s targeted campaign against insurgent leaders, this allowed the government to gain the upper hand. Similarly, in Northern Ireland, British intelligence collection allowed the COIN forces to severely curtail PIRA activities throughout Northern Ireland and Western Europe. Table 6.2 presents the relationship between initiative and intelligence against outcomes for the two subpopulations of interest. Virtually all

Table 6.2
Initiative and Intelligence Concepts Implemented Versus Case Outcome for Motive-Focused and Iron Fist Cases

		Motive-Focused Cases		Iron Fist Cases	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win	COIN Loss	COIN Win
Both initiative and intelligence	Yes	0	7	1	9
	No	4	4	26	8

cases in which both concepts are present—regardless of whether they are iron fist or motive-focused cases—are COIN wins.

Taken together, Tables 6.1 and 6.2 reveal one further interesting (if not that surprising) finding: COIN forces in iron fist cases are much more likely to seize the initiative without the necessary foundation of intelligence than are motive-focused COIN forces, and they are thus much more likely to suffer the consequences of such indiscriminate applications of force.

Additional Observations About the Iron Fist and Motive-Focused Subpopulations

This section presents a few additional observations about these two subpopulations, beginning with the iron fist cases. As noted, only 17 of 44 (38 percent) iron fist cases were COIN wins. Thirty-three of the 44 involved violent practices and atrocities well beyond the pale of contemporary U.S. ethical standards, including 13 of the 17 iron fist COIN wins. Very few (three) of the iron fist COIN forces avoided excessive collateral damage or other illegitimate applications of force; those that did, however, won. Iron fist COIN forces do not require popular support; 11 of the 17 wins under this paradigm achieved that outcome without the support of the majority of the population in the area of conflict. In Chapter Four, under the discussion of tangible support reduction, we showed that all winning COIN forces in the 59 core cases managed to reduce at least three of ten insurgent tangible support factors, and that in only two COIN losses were COIN forces able to reduce tangible support. Both of the cases in which tangible support was reduced but the COIN force still lost were iron fist cases: Afghanistan (anti-Soviet) and the Lebanese Civil War. Just as with the Israelis in Lebanon, no matter how effective Soviet COIN forces were in reducing the insurgents' tangible support, Afghanistan's predominantly Muslim population was never likely to have high levels of popular support for the "godless communists." Further, the Soviets' scorched-earth policy in parts of the country did nothing to endear them to the locals.

Turning to the motive-focused cases, we see that popular support is positively correlated with motive-focused success. All 11 of the

motive-focused COIN winners improved their level of popular support across the span of the conflict (see factors 87 and 88 in Appendix E). All the motive-focused COIN winners did many things right: The lowest COIN scorecard score for a motive-focused winner is 6.

The bottom line is clear: While iron fist COIN forces *can* beat insurgencies, the most effective concepts and the most ethically permissible concepts align with a motive-focused or balanced COIN paradigm. That motive-focused or balanced concepts were more successful than iron fist cases should not be surprising, though. After all, insurgency is, in some sense, armed politics. Iron fist concepts address the *armed* part of the duality but do little to speak to the *politics* side of the equation.

Qualitative Comparative Analyses for the Motive-Focused Subpopulations

Repeating QCA for the 44 iron fist cases revealed nothing new or interesting; the same sets of prime implicants derived from the 59 core cases worked. (Such is the nature of prime implicants. If they fully discriminate outcomes in the full population, they will also do so for any subsample or subpopulation.) QCA for the 15 motive-focused cases did produce some slightly different subpopulation-specific additional prime implicants, however.

QCA for the 15 motive-focused cases required only a single prime implicant: a reduction in tangible support. Removing tangible support from consideration still allowed the easy discrimination of the 11 COIN wins and four COIN losses with any two of the following factors (so, any two together make a sufficient prime implicant): pacification, legitimacy of the use of force, unity of effort, initiative, border control, and intelligence.

Since the overall results of this study suggest that the motive-focused paradigm is the best choice when fighting insurgencies, QCA on this subpopulation merely confirms the priority placed on tangible support reduction by the QCA of all 59 core cases.

External Actor Subpopulations

As reported in Chapter Three, the 28 cases that involved forces from a major external power intervening on behalf of the government were evenly split between COIN wins and losses. From the perspective of a country that is likely to participate in a COIN campaign only as an external actor, this is good news. COIN campaigns supported by external actors are not that much more likely to be losses, even though cases that require external support are, logically, the most difficult cases.¹

The COIN Concepts and External Actors

We revisited all the concepts tested in Chapter Four for the 28 cases involving external forces from a major power intervening on the side of a COIN force. As was the case with the iron fist and motive-focused subpopulations, the concepts all received the same level of support in the external actor cases as they did in the full 59 core cases. Again, from the perspective of a potential external actor, this is good news; the same things that allow a government to defeat an insurgency by itself also allow a government to defeat an insurgency with help.

Several of the concepts have been advocated as specifically applicable to cases involving an external actor and thus merit further discussion. As shown in Table 4.26, the number of “put a local face on it” factors present and the outcomes of the 28 external actor cases are virtually uncorrelated. This does not mean that efforts to promote the competence of host-nation security forces and transition to them the execution of the COIN mission do not contribute positively in individual case narratives and, more broadly, to other important factors, such as legitimacy and the demonstration of commitment and motivation. It merely suggests that putting a local face on it is nei-

¹ If a government were robust or an insurgency trivial, offers by neighbors or allies to commit troops to oppose the insurgency would be rebuffed as unnecessary or as a threat to sovereignty. Similarly, a potential external supporter of a government would much rather see the government sort out its internal security issues with as little outside assistance as possible. Only when an insurgency is perceived as a serious threat relative to the capabilities of the government are external powers likely to offer direct military support and is such support likely to be accepted.

ther strictly required for COIN success nor a guarantee of such success when external forces are supporting the government. Table 4.28 shows similar results for cultural awareness. Cultural awareness among external forces may enable other positive factors (and the case narratives suggest that it does), but in the historical cases involving external forces on the side of the government, cultural awareness was not necessary to win, nor was it strongly correlated with success when present.

Commitment and motivation is the final concept meriting specific mention in the context of external actors. Originally designed as a test of the relationship between the external actor and host-nation government (“you can’t want it more than they do”), this concept proved to be applicable across all 59 core cases. It received strong support in Chapter Four and was highlighted as a priority in the QCA in Chapter Five. This importance is even more apparent when governments are supported by external forces. As Table 6.3 shows, *no* externally supported governments that managed to prevail lacked commitment and motivation. Commitment alone is not sufficient to guarantee success, but its absence is sufficient to always accompany failure among this set of 28 cases. The history of modern insurgency suggests that no matter how committed the external power is, if the indigenous government and COIN forces do not demonstrate a commitment to defeating an insurgency, the insurgency will not be defeated. As an external COIN actor, you can’t want it more than the host-nation government.

Table 6.3
At Least Four Commitment and Motivation Factors Versus
Case Outcome for the External Actor Subpopulation

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
At least four commitment and motivation factors	Yes	6	14
	No	8	0

We further divided the 28 external actor force contributions on the COIN side into those that were limited to advisers, SOF, or air power (13 cases) and those that involved significant ground force contributions (15 cases). We observed some significant difference in the patterns of concepts supported between the two, or between either and the full population of cases (the 59 core cases).

Additional Observations Regarding External Actor Cases

We have a few other interesting observations regarding external actor cases. First, no COIN force prevailed while the insurgents had an external professional military fighting on their behalf unless the COIN force also had an external professional military fighting on its behalf. This suggests that, in some cases, advisers and SOF may not be enough. Second, where significant external forces were engaged, coordination between those forces and other COIN forces is critical. Factor 160 is “Effective coordination between diverse COIN forces (e.g., police, paramilitary, various military forces, different country forces).” This factor was present in all seven cases in which significant external forces were present and the government won, but it was absent in seven of the eight cases in which the government lost. (See Table 6.4.)

Third, the willingness of indigenous COIN forces to take casualties is correlated with success, being present in 13 of 14 winning cases involving an external actors’ forces. (See Table 6.5.)

Table 6.4
Coordination Versus Outcome for Cases Involving
Significant External Ground Forces on Behalf of the
Government (n = 15)

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Coordination between diverse COIN forces (e.g., police, paramilitary personnel, various military forces, different countries’ forces) effective	Yes	1	7
	No	7	0

Table 6.5
Indigenous COIN Force Willingness to Take Casualties
Versus Outcome for the External Actor Subpopulation

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Indigenous COIN forces' willingness to take casualties was high	Yes	9	13
	No	5	1

A final observation about external actors has to do with their departure. Where an external actor has committed significant ground troops, there are basically two scenarios under which they leave: The first is leaving the host nation to wrap up, when either the insurgency is defeated or the indigenous COIN force has become sufficiently strong to face the insurgents on its own; the second is when the external supporter has reached the end of its own domestic political will and is withdrawing from a contest still in doubt, leaving the indigenous COIN force to stand on its own. Sometimes, the sudden or eventual departure of an external COIN force is a condition of any potential peace agreement with the insurgents. In these data, there were 13 cases in which an external actor was the primary COIN force at some point during that case (so, 13 of the 15 cases in which external actors contributed significant ground forces to the COIN effort). In seven of those 13, an external actor was still the primary COIN force in the decisive phase (meaning that the external actor either substantially drew down or left entirely in the other six). Of the seven external actors that stuck it out, four won. Of the six that drew down or departed, the government it left behind won only twice. This is not a large enough sample to draw definitive inferences by any means, but it does indicate that withdrawing external support—whether leaving a strong indigenous capability to mop up or cutting and running—is potentially capricious. The narratives highlight the importance of sustained external support for both the government and the insurgents where it has been present. Many

narratives (see the summaries in Chapter Two) highlight the importance of the withdrawal of external support from either side as being instrumental in determining case outcomes.

QCA and External Actors

As noted earlier in this chapter, all prime implicants for the larger population of the 59 core cases apply to the 28 external actor cases, as that is the nature of prime implicants. The pattern of possible prime implicants for the 28 external actor cases is similar to those for the 59 core cases. Among the 28 external actor cases, every case was characterized by five concepts (instead of four for the larger population):

- flexibility and adaptability
- commitment and motivation
- tangible support reduction
- border control
- at least two of the following: unity of effort, initiative, or intelligence.

The only difference from the core implicants in the full data is the addition of border control. Border control comes in because 26 of the 28 external actor cases had some kind of cross-border support flowing to insurgents at some point during the case, and all 14 winners had substantially reduced that flow by the end of the conflict.

Other than the addition of border control, it is noteworthy that there are no other additional concepts competing as prime implicants for this subpopulation. This confirms the finding noted in the section “The COIN Concepts and External Actors,” which is that defeating an insurgency with the help of external forces relies on the same concepts as doing so without external forces.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study employed data collected for 204 phases of 71 insurgencies begun and completed between WWII and 2010. Each case was supported by a detailed case narrative and also by quantitative data on nearly 300 individual factors. These analyses benefited considerably from including both quantitative and qualitative data and from being able to move back and forth between the two. The qualitative narratives frequently suggested new factors or hypotheses, which were then tested comparatively across cases using the quantitative data. Patterns that did not make sense in the quantitative analyses were explored in the detailed narratives, with the nuance from the narratives being turned back into the quantitative analyses in the form of still more new hypotheses or new factors. Analyses tested specific COIN concepts, prioritized these concepts, considered factors associated with longer or shorter insurgencies, and examined factors related to the duration of postconflict peace intervals. We conclude with a reprise of the key takeaways from our findings, elaborated and expanded by way of conclusions and recommendations.

Key Findings

Because this research was vast in scope, the results are rich, detailed, and sometimes complicated. While different readers may find different aspects of our findings to be the most interesting or illuminating, this section presents findings identified as key in formulating and supporting successful COIN operations.

The Iron Fist COIN Path, Focused Primarily on Eliminating the Insurgent Threat, Is Historically Less Successful

The historical cases primarily followed one of two COIN paths: the “iron fist” path, with a focus preponderantly (and often almost exclusively) on eliminating the insurgent threat, or the motive-focused path, with primary or at least balanced attention to addressing the motives for beginning and sustaining the insurgency. While both paths can lead to success, historically, COIN forces following the iron fist path won only 32 percent of the time, while those on the motive-focused or mixed path won 73 percent of the time. Not only have iron fist COIN efforts failed more often than they have succeed, but they have almost always involved atrocities or other COIN force behaviors that are “beyond the pale” by contemporary U.S. ethical standards, ranging from forced resettlement and coerced labor in Indonesia, Kampuchea, and other cases to the “disappearances” or civilian massacres in Algeria, Afghanistan in the 1990s, Tajikistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and others.

While this finding appears particularly relevant to ongoing debates between advocates of population-centric or enemy-centric COIN, this report argues that different categories provide better context for these results and a more nuanced understanding of COIN going forward. The reason iron fist COIN forces struggle is that they focus exclusively on the insurgents at the expense of the support for those insurgents, and they focus exclusively on kinetic action to eliminate those insurgents at the expense of efforts to diminish the motives for the insurgency (and for supporting the insurgents). *Successful COIN forces find a balance between types of targets (insurgent support or the insurgents themselves) and types of actions (efforts to kinetically eliminate insurgents/support versus efforts to diminish the motives for insurgency/support).* COIN forces on the motive-focused path succeeded not just because their main emphases included motive-diminishing actions, but also because they fought the insurgents and targeted both insurgents and support. The (relatively small) number of iron fist path winners prevailed with a primary emphasis on smashing the insurgents but also found ways to diminish insurgent support as a secondary consideration.

Following the pair of dichotomies offered in Chapter One (targets and actions against those targets), we found that COIN forces that defeat insurgencies target both the insurgents' tangible support and the insurgents themselves, and they usually do so by focusing on the motives for the insurgency (and the support) and by using force. Future COIN forces would benefit from seeking balance on both of these dimensions. When considering COIN concepts, a future COIN force would do well to implement concepts that are supported here but also to make sure that the concepts employed and overall strategy adopted address both support and active insurgents—and do so through both diminishing motives and kinetic diminution.

Seventeen of 24 COIN Concepts Tested Receive Strong Support, and One (“Crush Them”) Has Strong Evidence Against It

Table 4.33 lists the 24 concepts for COIN tested in our study. Seventeen of the 24 received strong empirical support.¹ Three of the strongly supported concepts are singled out for more detailed attention in the next section because they were identified as priority concepts that were always present in COIN force victories. Strong evidence arose against one concept: “crush them.”

Effective COIN Practices Run in Packs, and Some Practices Are Always in the Pack: Tangible Support Reduction, Commitment and Motivation, and Flexibility and Adaptability

One of the key findings of the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* research was that “effective COIN practices tend to run in packs,” that COIN forces that defeated insurgencies implemented numerous effective practices rather than just a few.² The current study found that effective COIN practices still run in packs, but the wide range of cases considered here allows better discrimination of COIN essentials. QCA techniques identified three priority COIN concepts. These three con-

¹ Note that 18 rows in Table 4.33 are listed as receiving strong support; this is because a single approach, legitimacy, has been subdivided into two rows: one for government legitimacy and one for legitimacy of the use of force.

² Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xv.

cepts were implemented in every COIN win, and no COIN loss implemented all three:

- tangible support reduction
- commitment and motivation
- flexibility and adaptability.

Implementation of all three of these concepts appears to be a prerequisite for COIN success, based on the core historical data of this study.

Tangible support refers to the ability of the insurgents to maintain needed levels of recruits, weapons and materiel, funding, intelligence, and sanctuary. In every COIN win, COIN forces managed to substantially reduce tangible support to the insurgents; only two COIN forces managed to substantially reduce insurgent tangible support and still lost.

Tangible support is not the same as popular support. Although tangible support can come from a supporting population, it can also come from an external supporter (a state sponsor, a diaspora, or a nonstate sponsor). This report echoes the finding from *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* that “tangible support trumps popular support.”³ In many cases, tangible support came from the population and the level of popular support corresponded with levels of tangible support. When they did not match, however, victory followed tangible support. All three cases in which the government had the support of the majority of the population but the insurgents’ tangible support was not significantly interrupted were COIN losses. Among the 14 cases in which the COIN force reduced flows of tangible support to the insurgents, but the insurgents retained their popular support, the COIN force won 12.

Commitment and motivation assessed the extent to which the government and COIN forces demonstrated that they were actually committed to defeating the insurgency, rather than maximizing their own personal wealth and power, bilking external supporters by extending the conflict, or avoiding (or fleeing) combat. In all COIN wins, the

³ Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xxii.

government and COIN force demonstrated their commitment and motivation; all 17 of the cases in which commitment and motivation were assessed as lacking were won by the insurgents.⁴ Note that this set of factors considered the commitment and motivation of both the threatened government and the COIN force, not just one or the other.

Flexibility and adaptability captures the ability of COIN forces to adjust to changes in insurgent strategy or tactics. While some COIN forces failed to adapt (and lost) in early or intermediate phases in cases that they still managed to win, all successful COIN forces made any necessary adaptations in the decisive phase of each case.

Every Insurgency Is Unique, but Not So Much That It Matters at This Level of Analysis

A regular theme in discussions of insurgency is that “every insurgency is unique.” The distinctive narratives for the 71 cases studied here led the authors to concur, except that those distinctive or unique characteristics do not matter at this level of analysis. All of the findings of this study hold across the core cases without exception for unique narratives or cases.⁵ This holds for the prioritized concepts, and it holds for the COIN scorecard. A simple scorecard of 15 good practices and 11 bad practices perfectly discriminates the 59 core cases into wins and losses.

Subtracting the total number of bad practices in the decisive phase of each case from the total number of good factors produces a scorecard score. If the score is negative (more bad practices than good), then the case was a COIN loss; if the score is positive (more good practices than bad), the case was a COIN win. No exceptions.

⁴ Before dismissing this result as trivial or obvious, note that there are several cases in the data in which an external actor contributed well-motivated and professional COIN forces in support of a government fighting an insurgency, but the government and indigenous COIN forces failed to demonstrate their resolve. All of these cases led to COIN losses. U.S. involvement in Vietnam is one obvious example, as is Egypt’s campaign in Yemen.

⁵ Where the distinctive features and characteristics of individual insurgencies most certainly *do* matter is in actual efforts to implement concepts and practices on the ground. Our findings do not suggest a one-size-fits-all approach to COIN at the execution level; rather, these findings suggest that there is a finite set of good practices that a COIN force should always aspire to realize, but how a COIN force actually does so in any given operation will vary with the context.

While the scorecard is not a strategy for or a theory of COIN and could not, by itself, be used to plan a COIN campaign, it is a useful diagnostic tool. If an ongoing COIN campaign has a positive scorecard score, that is a clear indication that it is headed in the right direction. If such a campaign has a negative score, it indicates that something is wrong: There is a need to either amplify certain supporting efforts and make more progress in certain areas or revisit existing COIN strategy to make sure effective practices are pursued.

Quality Is More Important Than Quantity, Especially Where Paramilitaries and Irregular Forces Are Concerned

Of perennial interest to scholars of insurgency are the force requirements for effective COIN. The granularity of data sought for these cases does not allow for conclusions regarding ratios of COIN forces to insurgents or specific COIN force composition ratios between regular forces, police, SOF, or paramilitary forces. These analyses do support some higher-level observations that should be of interest nonetheless.

First, in no case did the COIN force win unless it could force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas or win the preponderance of conventional engagements by the decisive phase. Governments seeking to transition their COIN forces to being able to overmatch the insurgents usually sought to increase both the quality and the quantity of their COIN forces. While quantity may have a quality all its own, in every historical case in which the question was relevant, COIN force quality appears to have been more important than quantity.

Second, most COIN forces used significant numbers of police, paramilitary, or militia personnel, with virtually no correlation with outcome. This is because, too often, these forces were inadequately armed or trained or otherwise ineffective. However, in the 23 cases in which police or paramilitary forces were not ineffective, COIN forces won 69 percent of the time. This is another historical endorsement of the importance of COIN force quality and is a further endorsement of the inclusion of such forces, if they can be adequately prepared.

Governments Supported by External Actors Win the Same Way Others Do

The results in Chapter Six show that external or externally supported COIN forces win almost as often as wholly indigenous COIN forces. This suggests that, by itself, using external forces is not a bad COIN practice. Further, results for cases involving COIN support by external actors match results from the core data; the same concepts that were correlated with COIN success in the broader data were also correlated with success in the external actor cases.

The external actor analysis raised two cautions, however. First, as noted previously, commitment and motivation of the government and COIN forces are critical to COIN success. This holds in external actor cases as well. No external or externally supported COIN force was able to prevail if the host-nation government was insufficiently committed. The caution, then, is for would-be external supporters: You can't want it more than they do!

Second, every case involving external professional forces supporting the insurgents was a COIN loss unless it was balanced by external professional forces supporting the government. This caution applies to those who advocate "light-footprint" support to COIN forces, support restricted to advisers, SOF, and air power. History suggests that if the insurgents have external conventional forces on their side, the COIN force needs such support, too.

COIN Takes Time, but Some COIN Practices Help End Insurgencies Sooner and Lead to More Durable Postconflict Peace

The duration of insurgencies varies widely; the median length of the 71 cases was 118 months (slightly less than ten years). Beating an insurgency takes longer than succumbing to one, on average: The median length of a COIN win was 132 months (11 years), while the median COIN loss was only 95 months (slightly less than eight years).

Chapter Five identified factors and concepts whose presence was correlated with shortening COIN wins and with prolonging the peace interval after a COIN win. The following concepts, in addition to being endorsed earlier as associated with COIN success, all signif-

icantly decrease the remaining duration of a conflict when they are present:

- tangible support reduction
- border control
- strategic communication
- beat cop.

These additional separate factors are also significantly associated with decreased duration:

- COIN force was of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas.
- COIN or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances.
- There were significant government reforms since onset of the conflict.

The analysis of postconflict peace intervals was much more limited, but it identified three factors significantly related to the stability of a COIN win and extending the length of the postconflict peace interval:

- There were significant government reforms during the conflict.
- There were significant ethical/professional/human rights–related military reforms during the conflict.
- The conflict caused significant host-nation economic disruption.

Note that reform (of both of the government and the military's human rights behavior) is not only a supported COIN concept (see Table 4.33), but individual reform-related factors also contributed both to reducing conflict length and to longer postconflict peace intervals.

After Good COIN Practices Are in Place, the Average Insurgency Lasts Roughly Six More Years

Because the COIN scorecard discriminates historical wins and losses so effectively, it begs a further question: Once a COIN force man-

ages to achieve a positive balance of good COIN practices versus poor COIN practices, how long do they have to sustain those practices? The answer is, on average, about six years.

All COIN wins in the data have a COIN scorecard score of at least 2 by their conclusion, but few achieve such a score in the first phase. The median remaining duration of an insurgency after the COIN force achieved a positive scorecard score was 69 months, so, on average, those that establish effective COIN practices prevail in 69 months. Note, however, that there is considerable variation around that average, but it suggests a planning point.

Poor Beginnings Do Not Necessarily Lead to Poor Ends

One of the key findings from *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* was that “poor beginnings do not necessarily lead to poor ends.” In other words, COIN forces that get off on the wrong foot have time to adapt over the course of an insurgency.⁶ This finding holds over the more comprehensive set of cases studied here. Each of the 71 cases was divided into between one and five phases, for a total of 204 rows of data. Each phase was scored for whether the COIN force or the insurgents had the upper hand at its end. Since each case had a single decisive phase, 204 minus 71 leaves 133 intermediate or initial phases. In more than half of the intermediate phases (32 of 58) en route to COIN wins at the case level, the insurgents held the upper hand. Only nine of 29 COIN winners at the case level “ran the table” and had the upper hand in every phase of the conflict. All of the others had at least one phase in which the insurgents got the better of it but the COIN force managed to win by the end anyway.

Recommendations

Taken together, these key findings suggest the following recommendations.

⁶ Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xxiii.

Recommendations for Defeating Insurgencies

Focus First on Overmatching the Insurgents, Defeating Their Conventional Military Aspirations, and Forcing Them to Fight as Guerrillas

No COIN force won while unable to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas or defeat them in the preponderance of conventional engagements (which occurred only when the insurgents should have fought as guerrillas but made critical strategic errors). If insurgents are able to give main-force battle, then the conflict is more like conventional warfare than COIN and governed by the principles of that type of conflict. Priority must be given to reducing the insurgents (or the insurgents' external supporters) to the point that COIN forces have clear conventional overmatch.

Identify Insurgents' Sources of Tangible Support and Seek to Reduce Them

The importance of reducing insurgents' tangible support is the center-most finding of this research. Successful COIN forces reduce not only the active insurgents but also the support that fuels the insurgency.

Recognize That Essential Tangible Support May or May Not Flow from the Population

Tangible support often comes from a supportive population, but it can also come from a diaspora or an external state (or nonstate) actor. Effective COIN requires the identification of sources of support and successful efforts to diminish it.

Be Prepared to Continue Good COIN Practices for Six or More Years After a Substantial Balance of Good COIN Practices Is First Achieved

The median duration of an insurgency after a COIN force achieves a positive scorecard balance is slightly less than six years. This duration is also quite variable and does not include the length of time required to achieve a positive scorecard balance in the first place. Recognize that COIN takes time, and be prepared for a long haul.

Avoid the "Iron Fist" COIN Path

Effective COIN balances action against both the insurgents and the insurgents' sources of support. Effective COIN also balances kinetic

action and action aimed at diminishing the motives for supporting or continuing the insurgency. Exclusive emphasis on kinetic action has been much less likely to lead to success in the past.

Generate or Retain Capabilities to Plan and Pursue Multiple Mutually Supporting Lines of Operation

Because of the balance required between motive-focused and kinetic action and the balance required between reducing insurgents and reducing insurgent support, COIN forces must be prepared to pursue multiple lines of effort simultaneously. Good COIN practices run in packs, and COIN forces must be able to realize a pack of good COIN practices at the same time.

Recommendations for Helping Others Fight an Insurgency When Building Host-Nation Security Forces to Fight an Insurgency, Balance Quality and Quantity, but Favor Quality

Because of the demands of effective COIN, better forces will fare better. COIN requires more than just armed warm bodies. While there is certainly a need to balance quantity and quality, too many troops of low quality can do more harm than good, as witnessed in the host of cases in which militias on the side of the COIN force ended up working at cross-purposes.

Help Host-Nation Governments Reform, Improve Their Commitment and Motivation, and Increase Their Legitimacy

Commitment and motivation is one of the factors characterizing all winning COIN forces and governments, and the findings specific to external actors show that committed external COIN forces do not make up for uncommitted host-nation governments. If supporting a partner plagued with corruption, internal divisions, poor governance, or other related challenges, improvement will likely be necessary before the insurgency can be decisively defeated. Encourage and support such improvement.

Retain Leverage Over Supported Governments and Elites to Encourage Sufficient Commitment and Motivation, and Avoid Creating Perverse Incentives or Dependencies

As an external actor, you can't want it more than they do. Uncommitted governments lose, and, historically, such governments have been more than happy to let someone else do their fighting for them for as long as possible. Make commitments of support contingent on demonstrations of commitment on the part of the host nation. The host nation may need to make progress in this area, and this need should not be held against it, but leverage to incentivize progress may also be needed.

Recommendations for COIN Doctrine and Theory

Move Away from Strategic Discussions Based on a Population-Centric Versus Insurgent-Centric Dichotomy, and Add Nuance by Specifying Target and Actions, Seeking Balance Between Them

Effective COIN balances action against the insurgents and action against the insurgents' tangible support, and that tangible support does not always stem from the population. Change the discussion to be cognizant of these facts and move away from polarizing and ultimately unproductive contention.

Revise COIN Doctrine to Reinforce Core Principles and Include Key Insights from This Research

FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, was being rewritten at the time of this writing. While the manual can certainly be improved, this analysis suggests that the criticism that has been leveled against FM 3-24 is largely undeserved. We recommend refining and improving FM 3-24, but the core principles should not be abandoned.

Questions for Further Research

The data collected for these 71 cases (289 factors over 204 phases) will support analyses that go well beyond those reported here. And should a future inquiry require data that are not (yet) in the database, additional factors could be added relatively easily.

Here are some questions that might be of future interest in this area, building on this foundation of data.

Big Footprint or Small Footprint?

These results show similar levels of success for external actors contributing massive ground forces (big footprint) and those contributing only advisers, SOF, or air power (small footprint), with most of the variation determined by the overall presence or absence of good COIN practices. Isolating external actor cases for additional scrutiny could provide further information on which to base decisions about levels of force in supporting future COIN efforts.

What Factors Lead to *Insurgent Success*?

All the analyses described here focus on the COIN force and the government, finding factors that are correlated with COIN success and trying isolate critical practices for defeating insurgents. Although we evaluated many factors relative to the insurgents, the insurgents play little role in these analyses, save as part of the conflict's context. While the policy issues of primary concern when this research was conducted addressed defeating insurgencies, what about cases in which we would prefer that the insurgents prevail? What are the best practices for overthrowing and defeating governments, and what efforts to support insurgents are most highly correlated with success?

How Do Insurgencies End?

While this report focuses on factors and practices that lead to effective COIN outcomes and, once that outcome is secure, on factors that might decrease the remaining duration of the conflict or improve the quality of the subsequent peace, questions remain about the "end games" of these conflicts. How, short of their total elimination and neutralization, are insurgent movements made to cease operations? What conditions are necessary for, or increase the likelihood of, negotiated settlements? What factors make cease-fires durable? What DDR approaches are effective?

How Many Troops Are Required?

One of the perennial COIN-related questions concerns force requirements: How many troops does effective COIN require? This question is usually asked in terms of force ratios: How many troops per capita or how many troops per insurgent are necessary? This research did not collect data about relative force sizes at sufficient granularity to answer these questions. The results in Chapter Five do suggest that the quality of COIN forces is more important than quantity, while recognizing that there is clearly a quantity requirement for success, too. Although it does not capture detailed troop counts or force ratios, the existing data set does contain variables that would be potentially useful in such analyses, such as information about COIN approaches and strategies, insurgent motivations and capabilities, and factors related to terrain.

Methods and Data

This appendix describes the overall methodological approach employed in this research, the historical COIN cases informing the analyses and how they were selected, and the specific methods used in the analyses. Our goal was to test the validity and range of applicability of the 24 COIN concepts described in Chapter Three against substantial historical evidence. How have COIN forces that have adhered to the tenets of the various concepts fared historically? How can these lessons inform preparations for contemporary and future COIN contingencies?

Charles Ragin's Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Early in our planning for the original research in this series (documented in *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*), we remembered a previous encounter with sociologist Charles Ragin's work on case-based comparative historical analysis using QCA, a tool designed to assess configurations of case similarities and differences using simple logical rules.¹ We carefully considered the application of his methods to this problem and concluded that QCA was an ideal match. We structured our data collection and analysis to allow us to employ Ragin's QCA approach in the original study, and we retained a similar structure for this extension of that research.

¹ See Ragin, 1987.

Through the use of “truth tables,” QCA provides a holistic approach to qualitative historical comparison by viewing cases in terms of combinations of binary (present or absent) factors.² Using computer algorithms first developed for the simplification of switching circuits, researchers are able to compare a large number of cases as configurations—many more than they could possibly “hold in their heads” using traditional case-oriented comparative methods. This case-based method for analytic aggregation allows for the quantification of otherwise voluminous amounts of qualitative data. As such, it compels researchers to be explicit about outcomes of interest and proposed causal relations, including necessary or sufficient causes and conditional or contributing causes.

QCA relies on the application of Boolean algebra to a truth table, in which selected factors are scored as present or absent (1 or 0) for all selected cases.³ The truth table has as many rows as there are logically possible combinations of values for the selected factors. (For example, including four binary factors in the analysis would result in $2^4 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 16$ rows.) Rows are first reduced by removing patterns of factors that do not occur in the data—that is, any row that does not correspond to one or more actual cases. Boolean algebra then allows further reduction of the combinatorial matrix to expose simplified patterns of relationships and determine the prime implicants.

² “Binary” indicates that a factor can take on only one of two values. In our case, that is *present* or *absent*, always represented by 1 and 0, respectively. A truth table, then, is a collection of rows of 1s and 0s that represent every pattern of presence and absence of the factors of interest that appear in the data.

³ Boolean algebra was developed in 1954 by George Boole. See George Boole, *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought*, Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2003. Boolean algebra differs from standard high school algebra in two ways. First, values are logical instead of numerical values. These are *true* or *false*, *present* or *absent*, and are represented as 1 or 0. Second, logical values dictate slightly different mathematical operations obeying slightly different mathematical laws. Many readers will be familiar with Boolean search operators, such as *and*, *or*, and *not*, as they can be used in some search engines. The application of Boolean algebra here has two implications: It requires us to structure our data with logical values (true or false, or, in our case, present or absent), and it allows complex patterns of data to be reduced to the minimum set of factors necessary to determine a pattern, called *prime implicants*.

Prime implicants are the minimally sufficient patterns of factors that fully describe the pattern of outcomes of a set of cases. In our analysis, the prime implicants are concepts (or patterns of factors representing concepts) that describe the patterns of success or failure (the outcomes) in our cases and thus received strong support.

Though the prime implicants are determined mathematically, once they are identified, the analysis can turn back to the qualitative nuances of the individual cases. Cases with surprising patterns, or patterns that usually result in success but did not, can be singled out for more detailed case-study analysis. This can lead to further inductive theory development. Imagine a situation in which the presence of three factors leads to a COIN force win in all cases except one. Thorough and careful examination of the details of that exceptional case could reveal many different things, any of which would be informative. It could be that one or more of the three critical factors are not really present in the exceptional case but they were evaluated as present based on a superficial reading of the history. Or it could be that the three critical factors are very much present, but a detailed exploration of the case reveals a narrative showing that the impact of the three factors was thwarted by the presence of a fourth factor, which proves to be absent in the other cases containing the original three factors of concern. In this event, the addition of a fourth factor perfects the set of prime implicants. (Now, the presence of three factors plus the absence of the new fourth perfectly predicts COIN force victory.) Discerning what exactly is exceptional about the exceptional case leads to a better understanding of that case and the other cases as well.

This method is particularly well suited to our research effort because it allows mathematical principles to be applied to fundamentally qualitative data without in any way compromising the qualitative nuance necessary to identify and resolve exceptions. Boolean reduction allows us to identify and evidence factors and interactions between factors that have historically led to successful COIN outcomes. Thus, we can test the concepts associated with these factors.

In many cases, the intention to apply QCA drove how we structured our data and the collection of those data. For a more in-depth explanation of how QCA was actually applied to the data, see the sec-

tion “Additional Details on the Use of Ragin’s Qualitative Comparative Analysis,” later in this appendix.

Case Selection

QCA is potentially applicable across any set of cases. As is true with any inferential analyses, findings are generalizable only across cases that can be argued to be comparable with the sampled cases. Since our sponsor’s interest was in preparing U.S. forces for success in contemporary and future operations, we sought historical cases that were likely to be as representative as possible of the contemporary state of the art in insurgency and COIN. In an effort to be contemporary yet comprehensive, we elected to study all insurgencies worldwide begun and completed between WWII and 2010. We chose completed cases because we were interested in factors that contributed to the outcomes, which are impossible to assess if the outcome is not yet determined. Once we had compiled a list of the world’s resolved insurgencies in the post-WWII era, we sought to narrow down our data set using an agreed-upon collection of distinguishing characteristics.

Identifying and enumerating historical insurgencies worldwide is a nontrivial undertaking. There have been many insurgencies in the course of human history and many other similar conflicts from which they must be distinguished.⁴ RAND’s Martin Libicki recently prepared a list of 20th- and 21st-century insurgencies.⁵ He began with a list of 127 insurgencies started by 1999 that was developed by other scholars.⁶ These 127 cases met three criteria:

⁴ Insurgency is a centuries-old form of conflict that pits the weak against the strong. Indeed, writing between 400 and 300 B.C., with an emphasis on intelligence, hit-and-run tactics, and adaptability, Chinese strategist Sun Tzu essentially laid out the basis for guerrilla warfare in his timeless classic *The Art of War*. Ancient Rome also provided fertile ground for insurgency in such places as Gaul and Judaea.

⁵ Libicki, 2008.

⁶ The base list comes from Fearon and Laitin, 2003.

- They involved fighting between states and nonstates seeking to take control of a government or region or that used violence to attempt to change government policies.
- The conflict killed at least 1,000 people over its course, with a yearly average of at least 100.
- At least 100 people were killed on each side (including civilians attacked by rebels).

Starting with this list, Libicki first excluded cases that could be classified as coups, countercoups, or insurrections. (There were 51 such cases; subtracted from 127, this leaves 76.) He then added 11 insurgencies that began (or crossed the threshold of 1,000 deaths) after the 1999 cutoff of the foundational list (so, 87 cases). Finally, careful consideration led two conflicts that had previously been excluded to be returned to the list. This left 89 insurgencies covering the period from 1934 to 2010.

To extend Libicki's list, we added four cases from a list prepared by the Center for Army Analysis and the Dupuy Institute that were missing but appeared to meet Libicki's criteria, for a total of 93 cases.⁷ Of the 93 total cases, we excluded 17 conflicts still considered ongoing or unresolved, which included not only conflicts listed as unresolved on Libicki's list but also two conflicts listed as resolved whose resolution our analysts disputed: Burma (1948–2006) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front insurgency in the Philippines (1977–2006). We then excluded one conflict that began before WWII: China (1934–1950); two conflicts that were not clear-cut cases of insurgency but insurrections followed by massive superpower interventions, Lebanon (1958–1959) and the Dominican Republic (1965–1966); one case that was more akin to a “police action,” Congo/Katanga (1960–1965); and one case that was less an insurgency and more of a coup (and, thus, should have been excluded by Libicki), the Biafran secession in Nigeria (1967–1970). These reductions left 71 cases, 30 of which were examined in the *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* research. The new set of 71 cases

⁷ See C. Lawrence, 2008.

includes all insurgencies worldwide begun and completed between WWII and 2010.

This set of cases has several attractive features from an analytical perspective. First, it is exhaustive over the period under examination, so it constitutes the universe of insurgencies begun and resolved between WWII and 2010. This is not a sample of insurgencies over this period—this is the whole population. No statistics are necessary to make inferences about the extent to which these data represent a larger population; the data are perfectly representative of the past 65 years of completed COIN operations. Second, they represent many different regions, with cases in South America, Central Asia, Africa, and the Far East. If regional differences in the conduct or context of COIN were to significantly affect the performance of various COIN concepts, these data would reflect them. Third, there is significant variation among COIN forces—from world superpowers (United States, Soviet Union) to near-peer nations (Turkey, United Kingdom) and non-peer nations (Rwanda, Tajikistan)—and insurgent forces, which span the spectrum from highly advanced (Lebanese Hizballah, LTTE) to less advanced (Revolutionary United Front, MNLF) and everywhere in between.

The Exclusion of Colombia (La Violencia) from the 59 Core Cases

As discussed in Chapter Three, Colombia (La Violencia) was excluded from the 59 core comparative cases because its outcome was deemed essentially indeterminate. The Colombia case was highly distinctive in its general narrative but most distinctive in its outcome. The COIN force did not “lose” in the traditional sense. By the end of the conflict, COIN forces and the associated political party had become so disenchanted with the current president, who was excessively corrupt and under whom the economy had suffered, that they were willing to negotiate a power-sharing agreement that would remove him from office. The government party retained substantial political rights under the power-sharing agreement, including a turn-taking process that would have the presidency alternate between parties, beginning with the leftists (the side of the insurgents). And there is the rub: Had the first turn been taken by the rightists (the party that controlled the government for most of the conflict), we likely would have scored this case

as “mixed, favoring COIN” instead of “mixed, favoring insurgents.” However, following the procedures laid out in Figure 2.2, we classified La Violencia as favoring the insurgents. Our procedure for making black and white out of gray worked so well that it allowed us to assign a clear outcome to a case that perhaps we should not have, a case whose outcome (such as it was) hinged on a specific personality and quirks of negotiation for power-sharing about which side would share the power first. Had the outcome favored the COIN force, this case still would not be a good example of good COIN practices; given how marginally the outcome favored the insurgents, it is definitely not a ringing condemnation of the COIN practices that were followed. We decided to consider the case as a poor learning example due to its minimally determinate outcome and thus flagged it for exclusion.

Factor Generation, Evaluation, and Scoring

For each case, we completed a case narrative and collected data on roughly 289 specific factors.⁸ Selecting the factors to evaluate was, itself, a methodologically interesting process.

Crisp-set QCA requires binary data for reduction to prime implicants using Boolean algebra. Given the difficulty of trying to quantify many of the concepts that we sought to test (e.g., security, democracy, legitimacy) in any discrete, scaled, or even ordinal way, binary (present/absent, or 1/0) scoring was eminently suitable.

The identification and refinement of these binary factors was an inductive and iterative process. We began with the 79 factors scored for the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* data set, which were based on an extensive review of the literature on strategic communication and COIN. We added several hundred additional factors as refinements and expansions, based on questions we asked ourselves about

⁸ While 289 is the number of factors used in our analyses and listed in Appendix E, we actually collected (or attempted to collect) data on several additional factors. Some of these factors are included in the data and set off from their main factor with a subordinate number (for example, factor 155a), and some factors are not included because they proved impossible to reliably ascertain in many of the cases (factor 139, for example).

the cases and data, questions raised during briefings and discussions related to *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*, or emergent questions in the ongoing and evolving literature on COIN.

Once we identified the practices advocated by the various COIN concepts and laid them out as measurable factors, we engaged in vigorous debate over whether the factors truly represented what we intended for them to capture. We revisited the factor list repeatedly as data collection and analysis progressed. This process of refinement spanned much of the project and relied on examples and experiences from the individual case studies whenever possible. Factors were adjusted (or eliminated) due to the difficulty assessing them with the available historical data, because of the nuance necessary for specific cases or to better capture the tenets of the concepts as they played out in real cases. Whenever a factor or its criteria changed, all previously scored data on that factor were reviewed for consistency across all phases.

For example, several of our preliminary factors were dropped as being too difficult to measure against the historical record. These included “messages consistent (or at least progressive) over time” in the realm of strategic communication, and “COIN force employed ID cards/checkpoints for population control.” Other factors were changed subtly to make them either easier to assess or more representative of the tenets. For example, “Leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by the majority of the population” became “Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by the majority of the population in the area of conflict.” “COIN forces attempted to secure border(s)” became “Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent.”

In addition to factors derived from specific COIN concepts and inductively revised based on experience with the actual data, we included factors induced from the cases. As we conducted the case studies, the preliminary narratives revealed other factors that appeared to make important contributions to determining case outcomes. After some discussion, we added these inductive factors to our factor list if they could not be explained away through reference to other factors.

All factors were scored as present or absent (1 or 0) for each case based on the best assessment of the analyst responsible for that case

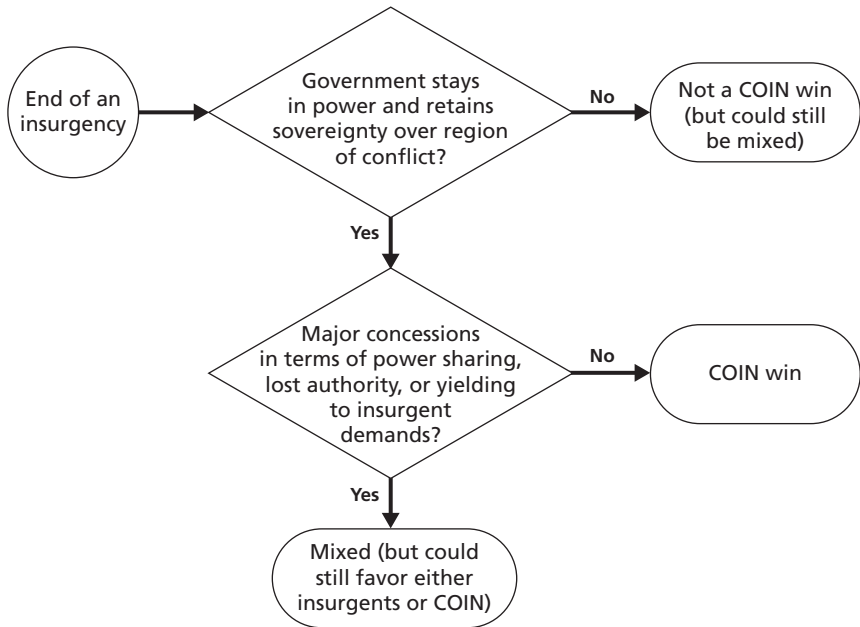
(unless the factor was specified as categorical, in which case the analyst used his or her best judgment to assign the phase to the proper category). To ensure consistency in criteria for evaluating the presence or absence of each factor, the research team met regularly to discuss factor assignments. Each project team member was responsible for a subset of the cases. Each analyst worked on at least ten cases concurrently, so all had ample examples on which to draw to illustrate a point, highlight a challenge to discrimination, or test candidate criteria language. We discussed factors and criteria to ensure shared understanding, and we collectively examined the details of difficult or borderline cases for certain factors. This exchange of concrete examples and counterexamples resulted in either new consensus and understanding of existing criteria or revision to the factor's wording or criteria. A full list of factors scored for each phase of each case appears in Appendix E.

Outcome Assessment

The step that was most critical to the results of the analysis was the assessment of the outcome of each case. Unsurprisingly, since we do not live in a dichotomous world, some of the case outcomes were somewhat ambiguous. Libicki, in the 89 cases from which we started our case selection, had provisional outcomes for each case as assessed by his research team, and many of them were "mixed." While we retained "mixed" outcome as a factor in the data, we knew we wanted a discrete binary outcome for our core analyses. In other words, "mixed" was not good enough. For each case with a mixed outcome, the case analyst made a determination of "mixed, favoring the COIN force" or "mixed, favoring the insurgents." In no case was the outcome so truly ambiguous that the result could not be clearly identified as favoring one party or the other. However, as described in Chapter Three, the outcome for Colombia (La Violencia), though identified as "mixed, favoring insurgents," was determined to be so thoroughly mixed as to render it effectively indeterminate with regard to its utility as a comparative case. It is the only case excluded from the core 59 cases based on its outcome.

To adjudicate unclear case outcomes, we followed the logic illustrated in Figure A.1. First, for each case, we asked whether the government against which the insurgency arose had stayed in power through

Figure A.1
Logic for Assignment of Case Outcomes



SOURCE: Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xiv, Figure S.2.

RAND RR291/11-A.1

the end of the conflict and whether it retained sovereignty over the region of conflict. If insurgents either deposed (or otherwise led to the fall of) the government or won de facto control of a separatist region, then the COIN force did *not* win. If the government remained in power and the country intact, then we further considered whether the government had been forced (or chose) to make major concessions to the insurgents, such as power sharing in government or loss of territory or other sovereign control, or whether it was otherwise forced to yield to insurgent demands. If the government stayed in power, the country remained intact, and no major concessions were granted to the insurgents, then the COIN force unambiguously won. If, however, major concessions were made, then the outcome was mixed. In all cases, what constituted a “major” concession and who (the COIN force or the insurgents) had the better of a mixed outcome was decided at

the discretion of the individual case analyst based on the distinct narrative of that case.

p and $(1 - p)$

As noted, virtually all factors were scored as present or absent, 1 or 0, for each case. Some of the factors are described as negations; for example, one factor is “COIN force *not* viewed as an occupying force in the area of conflict.” If this factor is scored present (1) for a case, that means that the COIN force was not viewed as an occupying force in the area of conflict. This follows standard practice for dummy or indicator variables and also adheres to English-language conventions regarding double negatives.

Some of the analyses focused on the presence of certain factors, while others focused on the absence of those factors. (Specifically, our analysis of good COIN practices focused on the presence of those good practices, while our analysis of detrimental COIN practices usually identified a poor practice as the absence of an otherwise positive factor.) While leaving the underlying data intact, we avoid double negatives throughout the discussion and presentation of the findings to the extent possible. We do this by invoking the relationship between a probability p and $(1 - p)$. Consider factors in which p is either 1 or 0 (as is the case for all our factor scores): $(1 - p)$ will always be the other of 1 or 0. So, if a case is scored 0 for “COIN force *not* viewed as an occupying force in the area of conflict,” that means that it is not *not* viewed as an occupier, which means that it *is* viewed as an occupier. We avoid awkward double negatives by describing the obverse factor rather than the negation of the factor; in this example, we would simply say, “COIN force viewed as an occupying force in the area of conflict,” if that were the relationship of interest.

Data Collection

Data for the case studies (both narrative and factor evaluation) came from secondary sources. The analyst assigned to each case thoroughly reviewed the available English-language history and secondary analysis

of the conflict for that case. Documentation proved voluminous for some cases (particularly those in Central and South America, but also cases in which Russian or Soviet forces were involved); it was much more sparse for other cases (particularly those in Africa). In all cases, available information was sufficient to meet our data needs.

Phased Data

We initially set out to score factors for the decisive phase of each case. Many of these cases lasted ten or more years and saw many different strategies employed by the government and the insurgents, as well as significant wholesale changes in exogenous factors that could be relevant to the outcome. By focusing on the factors present or absent at or immediately prior to the decisive point in the case, we hoped to capture the conditions that led to the observed outcome. Throughout this discussion, *case data* refers to the data for the decisive phase of the case.

We intentionally sought data for the decisive phase rather than the terminal phase because the two did not match in all cases. In three of the 71 cases, the decisive phase preceded the terminal phase: Baluchistan, Western Sahara, and Nagorno-Karabakh (see details in the accompanying case-study volume, *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies*, and that for the previous effort, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*).⁹ A single example is instructive. The insurgency in Nagorno-Karabakh followed an interesting path. In the initial phase, the Karabakh Armenian insurgency made modest headway against the government. In the second phase, the Russians provided heavy weapons to both sides, but the more disciplined insurgents took advantage of political discord in the government to seize the initiative and occupy and control the majority of the territory in their declared separatist region. In the third and final phase, the COIN force reorganized and put significant pressure on the insurgents, beginning to roll them back with a series of stinging victories. However, before the government could press its advantage, the

⁹ Paul, Clarke, Grill, and Dunigan, 2013; Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010a.

Russians put irresistible pressure on both sides for an immediate settlement, “freezing” the conflict with the insurgents still in de facto control of much of the territory they sought. Because of this peculiar close to the terminal phase, the second phase became the decisive phase; the factors changed in the third phase and did not have any effect on the outcome.

Due to the kinds of complexity that the Nagorno-Karabakh example illustrates, we ultimately separated each COIN case into one to five phases. While our core analyses still focus on the decisive phase, collecting data for all phases helped us avoid several pitfalls.

First, it seemed like a critical omission to summarize a case in a single row, with factors scored as present or absent that had not been present or absent for the majority of the conflict but were at the point of resolution. Second, those of us with backgrounds in comparative historical narrative research understood the possible importance of sequence in historical outcomes, a possibility we were ignoring by reducing our cases to a single row. The phased record for the whole case accurately reflects the condition of all factors throughout the conflict, not just in the decisive phase.

Identifying phase durations and break points proved to be at least as much art as science. Phases are not uniform in duration. A new phase was declared when the case analyst recognized a significant shift in the COIN approach, in the approach of the insurgents, or in the exogenous conditions of the case that caused changes in the assessment of several factors. Phases were *not* intended to capture micro-changes or tight cycles of adaptation and counteradaptation between the insurgents and the COIN force; rather, these were macro-level and sea-change phases. Case analysts had discretion regarding the number of phases and the number of factors that needed to change to constitute a phase change. As with the individual factors, phase breaks were discussed during team meetings to ensure comparability across cases. Secondary analysis of the cases often helped, as other analysts would include periods or phases in their narratives. Similarly, elections resulting in a change in government, or the entrance or exit of an important external participant in the conflict, were often clear indicators of phase change.

Analyses

Using these data, we conducted four different types of analysis. The first was a narrative for each case, presented in the companion volume of 41 new case studies, *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies*, and the previously published volume, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies*, for the 30 cases studied earlier.¹⁰ Full data for all factors for every phase of all 71 cases can be found in the accompanying Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet. The second type was a bivariate analysis of factors or concepts employed in cases or phases. Results from these analyses are presented in Chapter Four. The third was QCA, as described at the beginning of this appendix. The QCA results are presented in Chapter Five, and a detailed presentation of that analysis can be found in Appendix B. Fourth, and finally, was survival analysis of factors that increased or decreased the duration of insurgencies, as well as those that increased or decreased the duration of postconflict peace intervals. Results for these analyses are presented in Chapter Five, with further details in Appendix C.

Narratives

To give context to the raw phased factor data, we developed a brief narrative for each case. Each narrative includes a short summary of the case, a brief summary of each phase, a discussion of the conventional explanations of the case offered in the existing secondary analysis, and a list of distinct factors that were either uncommon but present in that case or wholly unique to that case.

Beyond this, we offer no separate analysis of the individual cases. In fact, one of the most striking findings of this research is that we do not need to discuss any of the distinct features or narrative peculiarities of the individual cases to wholly explain the outcomes. Unlike other research efforts, here, we are not relying on narrative historical methods to reach our conclusions.¹¹ In fact, our analysis supports the idea

¹⁰ Paul, Clarke, Grill, and Dunigan, 2013; Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010a.

¹¹ For various discussions of narrative historical methods, see Andrew Abbott, "Conceptions of Time and Events in Social Science Methods: Causal and Narrative Approaches,"

that it is a mistake to learn too many “lessons” from a single case, as the peculiarities and distinctions of a single case may obfuscate otherwise critical and enduring relationships between COIN practices and outcomes.

Bivariate Relationships

Our quantitative analysis began by identifying simple bivariate relationships between the various factors and the outcome of the case (or phase).¹² We computed bivariate correlations for all factors and case outcomes and also created 2×2 tables for each factor and the case outcome. We computed these bivariate relationships for all 71 cases, for the 59 core cases, and for the various subsamples identified in Chapter Three. For the reasons discussed in Chapter Three, the core analyses presented address the 59 core cases rather than all 71 cases. These 2×2 tables provided particularly interesting results, especially when the “diagonal” cells contained small values or were 0s, indicating a very strong degree of association between the factor and the outcome.

Table A.1 shows, for example, that in all 11 cases in which the government reduced corruption and or increased good governance, the government prevailed.

As is always the case with bivariate displays, no effort is made to control for the presence or absence of other factors. Thus, while Table A.1 suggests that reducing corruption is a good COIN practice, it tells us nothing about the other things those victorious governments and COIN forces were or were not doing.

Because our cases fully represent our population (we have the complete set of resolved insurgencies from 1944 through 2010), we do not compute inference statistics (e.g., χ^2 tests, p-values) for any of our

Historical Methods, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1990; Ronald Aminzade, “Historical Sociology and Time,” *Sociological Methods and Research*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 1992; and Robin Stryker, “Beyond History Versus Theory: Strategic Narrative and Sociological Explanation,” *Sociological Methods and Research*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 1996.

¹² *Bivariate analysis* denotes consideration of the relationship between two variables. In these analyses, there is always some factor (or stack of factors representing a concept’s factors combined into a single factor) considered in relationship to the outcome of the phase or case.

Table A.1
Sample 2x2 Table: Government Corruption Reduced
Versus Case Outcome for the 59 Core Cases

		Case Outcome	
		COIN Loss	COIN Win
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	Yes	0	11
	No	31	17

analyses. The relationships observed are perfectly representative of the relationships in this population of cases.

Factor Stacks

We also sought to examine the bivariate relationships between the 24 COIN concepts presented in Chapter Four and the phase and case outcomes. Because each concept is represented by more than one factor (see Chapter Four for the detailed breakdown of the factors for each concept), we faced a challenging question: How many of the factors associated with a given COIN concept must have been present in a case before the COIN force is considered to have implemented that concept? Rather than attempting to answer this question in an abstract or arbitrary way, we let the data speak and sought the best empirical cut point for each concept.

For each COIN concept, we created a new factor or variable that was the sum of all the factors tied to that concept and present in a given phase or case. We then chose a threshold value for that sum that maximized the number of COIN wins associated with the concept and minimized the number of COIN losses. Here is a concrete example: Legitimacy of the use of force as a COIN concept is represented in the data by six discrete factors (listed in Chapter Four in the section “Legitimacy”). For each case, we summed these six factors, creating a new variable, “sum of legitimacy of the use force factors.” The results are shown in Table A.2.

Table A.2
Sum of Legitimacy of the Use of Force Factors Versus Case Outcome (empirical cut point in red)

	Case Outcome	
	COIN Loss	COIN Win
6	0	7
5	0	3
4	1	4
3	2	1
2	9	3
1	7	5
0	12	5

Sum of legitimacy of
the use of force factors

Here, the empirical cut point was identified to be at four or more. Having at least four legitimacy of the use of force factors captures 14 of the COIN wins and excludes all but one of the COIN losses. Thus, we created a single factor to represent legitimacy of the use of force in the analysis: “at least four legitimacy of the use of force factors,” which was evaluated as present or absent in each phase of each case, just like all the other factors in the analysis.

We created a “factor stack” for each of the 24 concepts that we tested. These single factor stacks were used to represent each of the concepts in both the bivariate and qualitative comparative analyses. We also used the intermediate stage, the sum of factors, to combine and compare “good” practices and factors with “bad” factors (see Table 5.1 in Chapter Five).

Our decision to let the data speak and identify thresholds for satisfaction criteria for the adherence to certain concepts based on empirically observed cut points (see the discussion in Chapter Four) is open to criticism. One might argue that we should have set a theoretically based standard, either across all concepts (e.g., a threshold of 50 percent or even of 100 percent of an concept’s factors must be present to qualify) or based on individual concepts (e.g., How many of these fac-

tors or practices do the proponents of an concept suggest are necessary in order to prevail?).

Our decision to use empirically observed cut points is not a conservative one; it shows each concept in its best possible light by maximizing the ability of the factors to predict COIN success versus failure. We do not present the sums of factors for each concept, though they were part of our preliminary analysis. In our defense, for all concepts receiving strong support in our analysis (as listed in Table 4.33), choosing a higher threshold would only increase the predictive power of the single-factor expression of the theory and the outcome. That is, for each supported concept, higher thresholds would exclude case losses, ultimately to the point of perfection. Consider, for example, Table A.2.

Imagine if we had used a higher threshold. For the sake of argument, suppose we had insisted on the presence of more than two-thirds of a concept's factors before considering it to be implemented. For a six-factor stack like the one for legitimacy of the use of force, this would require five or six of the factors to be present. If we used that threshold, then we would conclude that legitimacy of the use of force was present in only ten of the 59 core cases. However, we would also conclude that it perfectly predicted a win every time it was employed. Similar patterns would be observed for all the supported concepts: Fewer cases would get credit for implementing each concept, but each concept would be shown to be even more successful as a predictor of outcome.

Additional Details on the Use of Ragin's Qualitative Comparative Analysis

As indicated at the beginning of this appendix, we structured our data to facilitate the application of Ragin's QCA approach. The construction of crisp-set truth tables requires that all data be binary, hence our efforts to reduce all factors and concepts to present or absent (1 or 0). For the actual analysis, we used Ragin's fsQCA (fuzzy-set QCA) software.¹³

¹³ Charles C. Ragin, Kriss A. Drass, and Sean Davey, *Fuzzy-Set/Qualitative Comparative Analysis 2.0*, Tucson, Ariz.: Department of Sociology, University of Arizona, 2006. See also Charles C. Ragin, *User's Guide to Fuzzy-Set/Qualitative Comparative Analysis 2.0*, Tucson, Ariz.: Department of Sociology, University of Arizona, 2006.

We used the crisp-set option in fsQCA to analyze our data.¹⁴ A wholly atheoretical data-mining approach would have encouraged us to take all 289 of our factors, enter them into a truth table, and allow Ragin's software to reduce them to prime implicants using Boolean algebra. While this might have exposed unexpected and interesting patterns in the data, it also would have increased our vulnerability to Type I error.¹⁵ In any event, this proved impossible. A truth table has a number of possible rows equal to 2^n , where n is equal to the number of factors included. Including all 289 factors would have required a table with 2^{289} rows, a mind-blowing matrix size, but, more importantly, a computer-blowing one as well. The current software limited us to the inclusion of no more than 11 factors at a time (so, a truth table of 2^{11} possible combinations, or 2,048 unique rows).

Based on our preliminary bivariate analyses of the case data, we entered composite factors representing the 18 COIN concepts that received strong support at the bivariate level into fsQCA.¹⁶ To ensure that we identified as many of the prime implicant patterns of these 18 composite factors as possible, we ran fsQCA analyses repeatedly, iteratively removing and replacing a factor each time we identified a prime implicant pattern. We iterated through composite elements of each set of prime implicants, slowly removing factors whose role as part of a prime implicant pattern had been explored, until the remaining factors were unable to fully explain the data. Details and results from this analysis can be found in Appendix B.

¹⁴ On the distinction between fuzzy sets and crisp sets, see Charles C. Ragin, *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

¹⁵ A Type I error is rejecting the null hypothesis when the null hypothesis is true—that is, asserting a finding when, in fact, what you have found is strictly the result of chance. This is a frequent problem in data mining. See Egon S. Pearson and Jerzy Neyman, "On the Problem of Two Samples," in Jerzy Neyman and Egon S. Pearson, *Joint Statistical Papers*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, [1930] 1967.

¹⁶ Chapter Four reveals that 17 concepts received strong support. One of them, legitimacy, was broken into two different factor stacks to test different aspects of legitimacy. That division was retained for this analysis.

Survival Analysis

Survival analysis is a statistical technique originally developed to answer questions in engineering about time to failure in mechanical systems (usually called “reliability analysis” in engineering) and in epidemiological studies to determine the impact of different treatments for (usually terminal) diseases or afflictions. The technique was broadened in its application in sociology (in which it is called, simply, “event history analysis”), and it is mathematically applicable to any situation in which Y , the dependent variable, is *time to event*, whether “event” is the failure of a ball-bearing, the death of a patient, or the end of an insurgency.

We use survival analysis to answer two questions in Chapter Five. First, what factors extend or reduce the duration of insurgencies? Second, once an insurgency has been resolved, what factors extend or reduce the subsequent period of peace (the “peace interval”)?

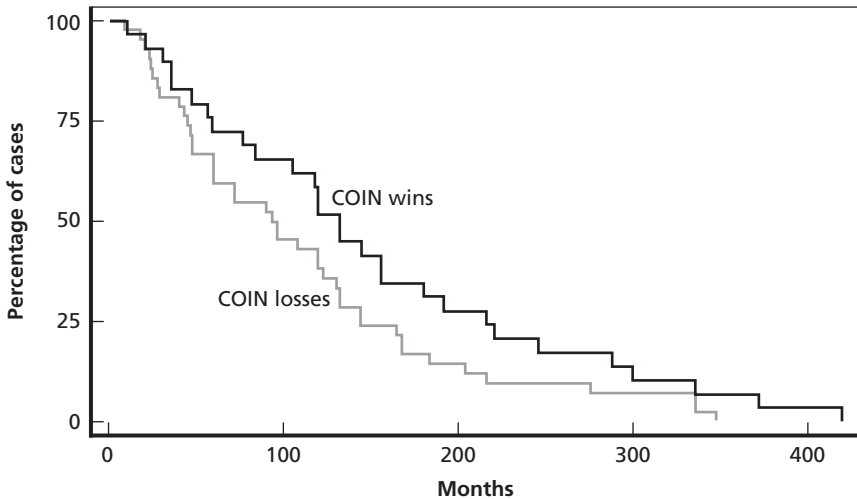
This discussion tries to remain at the general audience level and will not digress into formulae or advanced mathematical discussion. The reader who is interested in greater detail is referred to one of the many textbooks available on survival analysis or event history analysis.¹⁷ The core of the calculations for survival analysis is the *survival function*. The survival function is the probability that the time of event (traditionally, death or failure, but in our analyses the end of an insurgency or the end of the peace interval following an insurgency) is later than some specified time t and can be calculated for a population based on an appropriate sample of cases, as is true for most regression-based statistical techniques. Survival functions are most interesting in comparison. Consider, for example, the two survival functions depicted in Figure A.2.

Figure A.2 shows, for all 71 cases, the survival functions for COIN force wins and COIN force losses. The vertical axis of the case reports the proportion of cases remaining in the analysis (“surviving,” or, in this instance, still having an insurgency), and the horizontal axis reports the time in months from the beginning of each insurgency.¹⁸

¹⁷ See, for example StatSoft, “Survival/Failure Time Analysis,” web page, undated.

¹⁸ Note that the beginning of each insurgency is time = 0 for that case, regardless of the actual historical year in which the cases began. When we say that two or more insurgencies

Figure A.2
Survival Functions for COIN Wins and Losses (n = 71)



Points on the curve can be interpreted as follows. Visually find a point on the lower curve (labeled “lost cases”), perhaps the point where the curve reads “50 percent” on the vertical axis and is a few millimeters shy of “100” on the horizontal axis. The vertical axis reading of 50 percent indicates that half of the lost cases (in the full 71 cases, 42 cases were COIN losses, so 21 cases) survived to almost 100 months (actually 96 months, or eight years).

The curves representing the survival functions follow a “stepped” pattern because of the relatively modest number of discrete cases represented. Each step “down” represents the exact duration of one or more insurgencies (if more than one, a bigger step down, it means that multiple insurgencies had the same duration).

Overall, Figure A.2 shows several interesting patterns. First, on average, COIN wins had longer durations than COIN losses. This can be seen by the fact that the won cases’ curve is always above the lost

ended at the same time, we mean, for example, that they all ended after 72 months, not that they all ended on December 3, 1971. All times are duration times and are relative to the start times of the individual cases.

cases' curve. (It would also be interesting if they crossed; that would mean that one type of case tended to last longer up to a certain point. We might see these curves cross like that if, for example, time really did favor the insurgents.) Second, Figure A.2 shows us that, for wins and losses, the distribution of durations is not uniform. If the distribution were uniform, the curves would be straighter and more closely aligned with the diagonal on the figure. Instead, both curves are below the diagonal, and both curves have relatively longer (vertical) steps toward the lower right of the figure, indicating that some cases lasted a great deal longer than others, disproportionately longer. Of course, Figure 5.1 in Chapter Five also contains that information.

Comparing survival functions for different groups is at the heart of survival analysis, but looking at graphs of the survival functions is not always the most informative way to make these comparisons. Often more useful is the *hazard ratio*. The hazard function is slightly more complex than, though derivative of, the survival function. The hazard function is the event rate (as determined by the survival function) at a give time t , conditional on survival to that time t . (So, basically, the hazard is the calculated risk of experiencing the event after any point in time, assuming you've "survived" at least that long.) The *hazard ratio* is an overall comparison of the hazard functions of two groups, usually a group defined by the presence of one or more factors or variable as compared to the rest of the data. The hazard ratio is reported as a ratio, so if the hazard ratio is equal to 1, it means that the two conditions have equal hazard of experiencing the event (of the insurgency ending); if the hazard ratio for a group is positive, it means that it is at greater risk of the event (the insurgency is likely to end sooner, so duration is likely to be shorter); and if the hazard ratio is negative, it means that the group is at less risk of the event (so duration is likely to be longer). For survival analysis of duration, we sought factors with positive hazard ratios, as they are correlated with decreased durations. When examining peace intervals, however, we sought factors with negative hazard ratios—that is, those that decrease the likelihood of experiencing the event (in this instance, the end of peace), relative to cases without the factor—because longer peace intervals are preferable.

Data for survival analysis can be structured in a variety of ways. An analyst can calculate a hazard function for cases in single rows of data, where a single event time is noted and all other factors in the model are assumed to be constant from time = 0 to time of event, or the model can be calculated with multiple rows representing a single case, where only one of those rows ends with the event and the other rows represent blocks of time (or, in our study, phases) in which the event of interest did not occur but various other factors might have changed (perhaps the administration of some kind of treatment, or the presence or absence of one or more COIN concepts). Because our phased data allow us to identify blocks of time in which certain factors were present or absent, we used survival analysis techniques that were appropriate for individual cases with multiple sets of conditions prior to event. Note that while we report the total duration of each phase in months, we do not report the within-phase start time for each factor that changed its state (went from present to absent or absent to present) during a phase. For all survival analyses, we assumed that factors changed state right at the start of a phase and held only one value (present or absent) for the entire duration of the phase. This slightly decreased the precision of our results and weakened the relationships of beneficial factors to duration,¹⁹ so it is a conservative assumption.

One of the analytical challenges that survival analysis often faces is referred to as “right-censoring,” the inclusion of cases that do not experience the event during the period recorded by the data. This could be a patient who survives past the end of the study, a machine that continues to operate through the entire observation period, or an insurgency that is not resolved. In our analyses of duration, there is no issue with right-censored data. To be included in our data set, a case must

¹⁹ Imagine a factor that strongly increases the hazard of a conflict ending when present. It became present at some point during a 24-month phase. Regardless of when it actually became present, we assumed that it was present from the beginning. Now, imagine that it actually became present and began to exert its strong influence toward ending the conflict, at month 12 of the phase. That would mean that we had inaccurately attributed the factor as present for 12 months during which no such influence was being exerted, diminishing the calculated strength we attributed to the factor. If we still find that it had a strong impact on hazard, then it must be strong indeed.

have concluded, so when the event of interest is “end of insurgency,” that event always occurs in the data. However, the data on peace intervals are frequently right-censored. A peace interval is the time between the end of an insurgency and the start of the next one; many of our cases were not followed by subsequent insurgencies, so they have long peace-intervals that are right-censored; we do not know when (or if) those peace intervals will end. Right-censored data are a common and understood challenge in survival analysis, and the software we used to conduct this analysis is appropriate for the right-censored data.

All survival analyses conducted as part of this research were produced using STATA® and report estimates from Cox proportional hazard models calculated using the robust variance estimator (to correct for the fact that some countries hosted multiple insurgency cases and are thus not fully independent of each other).²⁰

²⁰ On Cox regression, see D. R. Cox, “Regression Models and Life-Tables,” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series B*, Vol. 34, No. 2, 1972. On robust variance correction, see D. Y. Lin and L. J. Wei, “The Robust Inference for the Cox Proportional Hazards Model,” *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, Vol. 84, No. 408, December 1989.

Details of Qualitative Comparative Analysis

The QCA approach we employed is designed to reduce patterns of observed factors to the minimum set sufficient to explain the outcomes (that is what prime implicants *are*). In the *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* 30-case data set, we (and QCA) were unable to make any discrimination between more than a dozen equally plausible sets of prime implicants because of the co-occurrence of so many positive factors in the eight COIN wins and their rarity in COIN losses. To give a simple example: If *A* and *B* both occur in every win and never in a loss, which is more important, *A* or *B*? Discrimination was impossible. Among the 59 core cases in these data, however, there are more marginal cases on both sides; that is, there are COIN wins with fewer positive practices and COIN losses that involved more (but clearly not enough) positives. A COIN force that won while engaging in a smaller number of positive practices helps isolate which practices are critical; similarly, a COIN force that lost while doing some of the things that we have identified as positive practices helps identify which concepts are, by themselves, insufficient. Overall, this allowed us to identify a smaller number of prime implicants (presented in Chapter Five) and make claims about the relative importance, strength, or value of the different concepts.

In our QCA, we entered the factor stacks for the 18 COIN concepts for which we found strong support at the bivariate level into fsQCA:¹

¹ The bivariate analysis found strong support for 18 concepts (actually, 17, but legitimacy was divided into “government legitimacy” and “legitimacy of the use of force” when tested, and both components received support). As indicated in Appendix A, fsQCA would resolve

1. at least two of four development factors
2. at least two of six pacification factors
3. at least one of two government legitimacy factors
4. at least four of six legitimate use of force factors
5. at least four of five reform factors
6. the single unity of effort factor
7. at least two of six cost-benefit factors
8. the single border control factor
9. the single initiative factor
10. at least three of five strategic communication factors
11. at least four of nine FM 3-24 factors
12. at least two of clear, hold, and build
13. at least four of nine “beat-cop” factors
14. at least three of six “boots on the ground” factors
15. at least four of eight commitment and motivation factors
16. at least three of ten tangible support factors reduced
17. at least one of two intelligence factors
18. the single flexibility and adaptability factor.

Iterative QCA found a variety of prime implicants of varying complexity and revealed two useful sets of information: first, a single, simple two-factor prime implicant and, second, nine concepts that consistently contributed to relatively simple prime implicants.

In all iterations of QCA, we identified only one prime implicant that required only two factors to perfectly discriminate the 59 core cases into wins and losses: tangible support reduction and commitment and motivation. These two factors are both present in all COIN win cases, and at least one of them is absent in all losses. No other set of prime implicants is as simple, with all others requiring more implicants or more concepts as part of those implicants to discriminate among the cases.

truth tables based on only 11 factors at a time. Since we could not test all 18 concepts at once, we rotated the factor stacks in and out of the analysis, finally removing a factor once it had had a chance to join a set of prime implicants with all of the factors being tested.

Repeated iterations of QCA also revealed that nine of the 18 factor stacks consistently contributed to prime implicants. These nine factor stacks fit into one of two categories: those that were present in every winning case (suggesting in the logic of causation that they might be *necessary*) and those that appeared only in winning cases (suggesting in the logic of causation that they might be *sufficient*).² In the 59 core cases, every winning COIN force implemented these four concepts, and no losing COIN force had all four of them:

- commitment and motivation
- tangible support reduction
- flexibility and adaptability
- at least two of the following: unity of effort, initiative, or intelligence.

No losing case included any of these three concepts:

- pacification
- FM 3-24
- strategic communication.

Table B.1 presents the truth table for these nine factor stacks and whether the case was a COIN win, making it easy to see the concepts that are always present in wins and those that are only present in wins. Remember, as in all our data, 1 corresponds to the presence of a factor, 0 its absence. Each row in Table B.1 represents a pattern of factor presence and absence that appears in the observed data. Remember that all possible patterns of nine binary independent variables plus the outcome would be 2^9 rows; patterns that did not occur in the data were omitted. Patterns that occurred repeatedly are indicated in the column “Number of Cases.” So, for example, the very first row of data in the

² Of course, it is impossible to make any conclusive causal argument based only on correlative data, and we do not make a formal causal argument. Further, the factors that appear only in COIN wins cannot be established as sufficient in isolation, as each case that includes one or more of those factors also includes all of the factors that appear in every COIN win. From a correlational perspective, however, these are strong and compelling levels of association.

Table B.1
Truth Table for Nine Concepts That Could Contribute Prime Implicants and Case Outcome for the 59 Core Cases

Pacification	COIN FM	Strategic Communication	Flexibility and Adaptability	Commit. and Motivation	Tangible Support Reduction	Unity of Command	Initiative	Intelligence	COIN Win	No. of Cases	Sum of Approaches
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	9
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	3	8
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	8
1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	8
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	8
1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	7
1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	7
1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	7
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	6
0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	6
0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	3	5
0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	5
0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	4
0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	3
0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	2
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	2
0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	1
0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
18	19	12	28	28	28	24	22	22	= number of times present in a COIN win		
0	0	0	11	14	2	5	10	1	= number of times present in a COIN loss		

table describes the pattern of factors present in four of the 59 core cases, and the last row of data in the table describes ten cases. Twenty-eight (the number of rows in Table B.1) distinct patterns of these nine factors, plus the outcome, occur in the 59 cases.

Table B.1 includes several pieces of summary information. The right margin shows the sum of COIN concept factor stacks present for that row. For example, the first row of data (which we have already established as representing four cases) includes all nine of the consistently prime implicant, strongly supported concepts' factor stacks. The lower margin includes two summary numbers, the number of times each factor stack appears in a winning case and the number of times each factor stack appears in a losing case. So, for example, looking at the bottom margin for the first column, we see that the pacification factor stack was present in 18 winning cases and no losing cases. These numbers take into account the fact that some rows in the table represent multiple cases. The summaries in the bottom margins simply repeat what was already presented in the bivariate analysis of each concept.

A close examination of Table B.1 reveals many things. The first 16 rows of the table cover all 28 COIN-winning cases, and all the lower rows are case losses. Looking at the right margin, we see that four cases realized all nine of the consistent prime implicant factor stacks (Peru, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and the Philippines [Huk Rebellion]) and that all winning cases realized at least five of the nine. This corresponds to the core finding of the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* analysis: Good COIN practices run in packs. However, this analysis reveals that the "core" of the pack is relatively small and includes only six critical factors, three of which are always present and three more of which at least two are always present.

Details of Survival Analyses

Appendix A described survival analysis as the analytical approach we used to answer questions about the duration of insurgencies and post-conflict peace intervals. This appendix details the application of survival analysis to our case data and provides the full results.

Analysis of Insurgency Duration

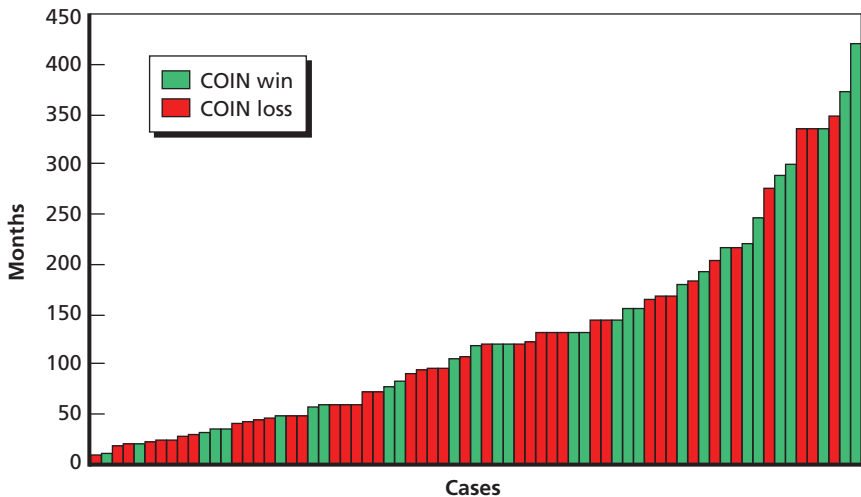
Figure C.1 shows the duration of each of the 71 insurgency cases. The median duration over all 71 cases was 118 months. On average, COIN wins took longer, with the median for 29 COIN wins being 132 months and the median for all losses being 95 months.

Figure C.2 shows the duration for each of the 59 core cases. For the 59 core cases, the median duration was 105 months. The median duration for core case COIN wins remains 132 months, while the median duration of COIN losses drops to 72 months.

Turning to the subpopulations, the 44 iron fist cases had a median duration of 94 months, while the 15 motive-focused cases had a median duration of 126 months. This stark difference is driven entirely by the fact that substantially more iron fist cases than were motive-focused cases were COIN losses, and losses take less time on average. The median duration of the few iron fist wins was 138.5 months, while iron fist losses took only 60 months on average. The median duration for motive-focused cases was 126 for both wins and losses.

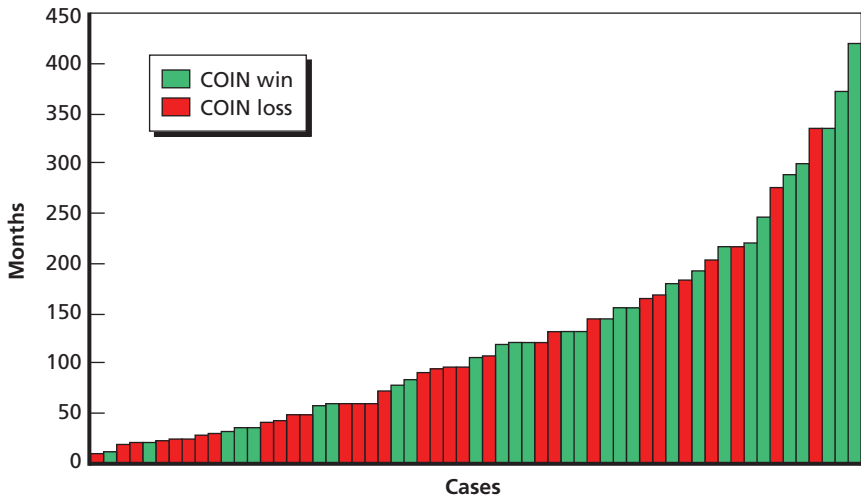
The median duration for the 28 cases involving active external actors was 126 months. When external actors contributed only advis-

Figure C.1
Durations of 71 Insurgencies



RAND RR291/I-C.1

Figure C.2
Durations of 59 Core Cases of Insurgency



RAND RR291/I-C.2

ers, SOF, or air power ($n = 13$), wins had a median duration of 138 months and losses 108 months. When significant external ground troops supported the COIN effort ($n = 15$), wins had a median duration of 132 months, and losses averaged 117 months.

Survival Analysis

To ascertain what factors have helped reduce the duration of insurgencies and to identify factors that have extended insurgencies (and thus should, if possible, be avoided), we conducted survival analysis on our data (as described in Appendix A). We quickly realized, however, that considering all 71 cases would not be useful. Not only did we restrict the analysis to the 59 core cases as the best learning examples, but we further confined the analysis to the 28 wins for two reasons: First, factors that influence the duration of insurgencies may vary depending on which side wins; second, factors that help insurgents win faster are not really of interest here.

To choose factors to consider, we reviewed all factors in the data (289) and all factor stacks representing COIN concepts (25) looking for any that could plausibly affect duration when present, either hastening a conflict toward its conclusion or delaying its progress. This initial selection led to a list of approximately 110 factors or factor stacks.

We then calculated a Cox regression for each of these roughly 110 factors or factor stacks individually for the 28 core case wins. Although Cox regression will allow multiple covariates (that is, multiple independent variables at a time), we had no strong hypotheses about multiple factors and their multivariate relationships with duration, and we also wanted to be mindful of the relatively modest statistical power and degrees of freedom in the 28 cases, so we chose to test each individually. Table C.1 lists the 23 factors or factor stacks for which the hazard ratio for the presence of the factor against the absence of the factor was found to be significantly different from 1 at at least the $p < 0.05$ level. Factors are sorted by hazard ratio, so above the line are those with the highest hazard ratios and most strongly associated with an increased probability of the event (the end of the insurgency) when present (so, associated with decreasing duration), while below the line (and below 0) are those with hazard ratios associated

Table C.1
Factors and Factor Stacks with Statistically Significant ($p < 0.05$) Hazard Ratios for Conflict Duration

Factor/Factor Stack	Hazard Ratio	p
At least three tangible support factors reduced	23.055	0.003
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas (or to prevail in the preponderance of conventional engagements, should overmatched insurgents choose to give battle)	8.27	0.000
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	8.214	0.000
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	5.493	0.003
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	4.136	0.001
At least two strategic communication factors	3.927	0.000
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	3.502	0.001
COIN force or government actions did not contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	3.306	0.000
All three grievance redress factors	3.117	0.001
At least four "beat-cop" factors	2.826	0.004
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to the COIN force	2.716	0.005
All of clear, hold, and build	2.482	0.003
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	2.464	0.03
Significant ethical/professional/human rights-related military reforms since onset of conflict	2.289	0.004
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	1.983	0.024
Significant government or military reforms in phase	1.965	0.029
Significant government reforms since onset of conflict	1.902	0.023
Reforms recognized/appreciated by population in area of conflict	1.869	0.027
Government maintained weak policing capacity and infrastructural power	0.441	0.035
Terrain played a major role because it allowed insurgents to avoid/overcome COIN force firepower or vehicle advantages	0.428	0.024
Government repression and/or exclusion of significant societal groups from state power or resources	0.3888	0.005
Government sponsorship or protection of unpopular economic and social arrangements or cultural institutions	0.342	0.004
Insurgent leadership competent, able to develop and change strategy, and ensure succession	0.289	0.000

with a decreased probability of the event when present (associated with increasing duration).

The factors and hazard ratios in Table C.1 that are particularly noteworthy are called out in Chapter Five.

Analysis of Peace Intervals and Win Durability

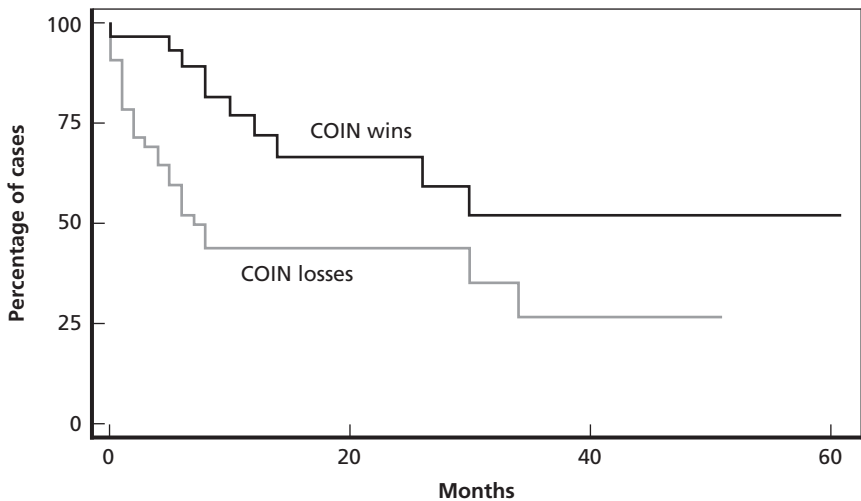
One of the observations from the original *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* study was that some countries were repeatedly plagued by insurgencies. Questions arose about these “serial” insurgencies. Ideally, a government facing an insurgency would seek ways not only to defeat that insurgency but also to reduce the prospects for a similar insurgency in the future. The resilience or durability of the outcome of an insurgency can be thought of in terms of the peace interval, the amount of time between the end of the first conflict and the start of the next (if there is a next). We approached this problem in two ways: first, with survival analysis and, second, with bivariate comparisons against holistically assessed win quality/win durability.

Of the 71 cases, 35 had their peace interval ended by another internal conflict before the end of 2011; the other 36 were still in their peace interval at the end of 2011 and are thus “right-censored,” as discussed in Appendix A. For the 35 cases that were not right-censored, the average (mean) length of the peace interval was 7.33 years, and the median was five years. For those that were right-censored, the average (mean) time until right-censoring was 20.9 years.

Survival Analysis

Figure C.3 shows the survival functions for the peace intervals for all 71 cases, divided into COIN wins and losses. Neither curve reaches 0 on the vertical axis (proportion of cases) due to right-censoring; roughly half the cases in the data did not reach the event (end of the peace interval) prior to the end of 2011. Together, the two curves show that cases in which the government won, on average, have lower probabilities of experiencing the event (in this case, end of the peace interval, or a new conflict) at every time point. Put another way, the analysis of

Figure C.3
Survival Functions for the Peace Intervals of COIN Wins and Losses (n = 71)



duration showed that (on average) beating an insurgency takes longer than losing to it, and this shows that once an insurgency is beaten, the ensuing peace will last longer (on average) than when the insurgents win.

Similar to the survival analysis of case durations, we began by isolating factors and factor stacks that might plausibly affect the durability of postconflict peace intervals. This proved to include roughly 60 factors or factor stacks. We conducted exploratory analyses of the relationships between these 60 factors or stacks with peace intervals for all 71 cases. We were not too surprised to find no interesting or statistically significant relationships across all 71 cases. As we had anticipated (but still wanted to confirm), the processes that lead to longer or shorter peace intervals differ depending on whether the conflict ends in favor of the government or the insurgents. So, we restricted subsequent analyses to the core cases in which the government prevailed ($n = 28$).

We ran Cox regressions for each of the 60 factors individually against peace intervals for the 28 core cases that were COIN wins. Disappointingly, only three factors proved to have hazard ratios that statistically significantly ($p < 0.05$) differed from 1. These factors (and their

hazard ratios) are presented in Table C.2. The small number of contributing factors is primarily a function of statistical power; the relatively small number of cases and the relatively low variation in peace intervals precluded all but the most extreme hazard ratios from achieving statistical significance. Remember that longer peace intervals are preferred, so factors that are associated with lower hazards are preferred, as they indicate the decreased probability of the event (end of peace interval) occurring at any time point.

Holistic Assessment of Win Durability

The other approach we employed to identify factors leading to more durable wins involved returning to simple bivariate analysis of various factors or factor stacks against a simple outcome. Rather than using the length of the peace interval as the dependent variable (as we had for the survival analysis) or using who won or lost (as we had for most of the other analyses), we wanted a binary outcome indicator assessing the quality or durability of the COIN win. With that in mind, for each of the 28 cases won by the government, each case analyst was asked to score the following factor as present or absent: “COIN force won in a stable, lasting way.” We confirmed these holistic assessments by mechanically assessing durability based on peace duration: A win was considered durable if the peace interval lasted at least ten years, or if the peace lasted until the end of 2011 if the case ended within the past five years. The mechanical assessment matched the holistic assessment in all but two of the 28 cases. We removed Sri Lanka from the analysis based on the case analyst’s advice that it is too soon to tell whether or not the

Table C.2
Factors and Statistically Significant ($p < 0.05$) Hazard Ratios for Peace Intervals

Factor/Concept	Hazard Ratio	$p <$
Significant government reforms during conflict	0.235	0.032
Significant ethical/professional/human rights–related military reforms during conflict	0.216	0.049
Conflict caused significant host-nation economic disruption	0.192	0.033

win would be durable. This left 27 cases, 21 of which were scored as good, or durable, wins and six of which were scored as poor, or fragile. Seeking to identify which COIN concepts lead not only to victory but also to durable peace, we evaluated the relationship between the 24 COIN concepts presented in Chapter Four and win durability. Table C.3 presents the summary results. Note that many of the concepts that are strong predictors of COIN success do little to discriminate win durability, as they are present in all or almost all wins, whether the peace intervals were durable or fragile.

Tables C.4 through C.13 provide cross-tabulations for the factor stacks representing these concepts against win durability.

Table C.3
Summary of Concepts Correlated with Win Durability (n = 27)

Concept	Factor/Factor Stack	Correlation with Win Durability
Development	at least two of four development factors	Strong correlation
Pacification	at least two of six pacification factors	Strong correlation
Legitimacy (use of force)	at least four of six legitimate use of force factors	Modest correlation
Reform	at least four of five reform factors	Strong correlation
Democracy	at least one of three democracy factors	Modest correlation
Strategic communication	at least three of five strategic communication factors	Strong correlation
Field Manual 3-24 (<i>Counterinsurgency</i>)	at least four of nine FM 3-24 factors	Strong correlation
Clear, hold, and build	all three of clear, hold, and build	Strong correlation
"Boots on the ground"	at least three of six "boots on the ground" factors	Modest correlation
Criticality of intelligence	at least one of two intelligence factors	Strong correlation

Table C.4
At Least Two Development Factors Versus Win Durability

		Win Duration	
		Poor Win	Durable Win
At least two development factors	Yes	1	11
	No	5	10

Table C.5
At Least Two Pacification Factors Versus Win Durability

		Win Duration	
		Poor Win	Durable Win
At least two pacification factors	Yes	2	15
	No	4	6

Table C.6
At Least Four Legitimate Use of Force Factors Versus Win Durability

		Win Duration	
		Poor Win	Durable Win
At least four legitimate use of force factors	Yes	2	12
	No	4	9

Table C.7
At Least Four Reform Factors Versus Win Durability

		Win Duration	
		Poor Win	Durable Win
At least four reform factors	Yes	1	10
	No	5	11

Table C.8
At Least One Democracy Factor Versus Win Durability

		Win Duration	
		Poor Win	Durable Win
At least one democracy factor	Yes	3	17
	No	3	4

Table C.9
At Least Three Strategic Communication Factors Versus Win Durability

		Win Duration	
		Poor Win	Durable Win
At least three strategic communication factors	Yes	1	11
	No	5	10

Table C.10
At Least Four COIN FM Factors Versus Win Durability

		Win Duration	
		Poor Win	Durable Win
At least four COIN FM factors	Yes	2	17
	No	4	4

Table C.11
Clear, Hold, and Build Versus Win Durability

		Win Duration	
		Poor Win	Durable Win
All three of clear, hold, and build	Yes	0	7
	No	6	14

Table C.12
At Least Three “Boots on the Ground” Factors Versus Win Durability

		Win Duration	
		Poor Win	Durable Win
At least three “boots on the ground” factors	Yes	2	15
	No	4	6

Table C.13
At Least One Intelligence Factor Versus Win Durability

		Win Duration	
		Poor Win	Durable Win
At least one intelligence factor	Yes	3	18
	No	3	3

Key Findings from *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* in Light of New Data and Analyses

As has been noted several times in this report, the data used in this analysis include all of the data from the original study, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency*.¹ This study asked the same set of questions, as well as several new research questions, many of which came out of discussion and commentary following the original study. Because the data used and the questions investigated here wholly encompass and expand upon the cases and data used in the earlier study, this study supersedes the original. Still, it is worth considering the findings and results of the earlier study in light of the updated results from the current effort.

There is considerable concordance between the findings of the original study and this one. First, both this study and the original represent high-quality, rigorous research. Second, the 30 cases considered in the original study are also in the database for this study. In light of the fact that most of the analyses in this report are based on 59 core cases, the original 30 cases account for slightly more than half the database. Still, many of the cases are new, and the total number of cases is larger, and any quantitative analyst will tell you that more data is an improvement. Refinements come from the increased number of cases, the increased number of factors assessed for each case, and from having more “marginal” cases (cases closer to being won or lost). Including cases in which COIN forces employed just enough effective COIN concepts to prevail or not quite enough to prevail provided

¹ See Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b.

more insight (and analytic traction) to discern which COIN practices are essential to success.

Revisiting the Key Findings of *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*

Victory Has a Thousand Fathers offered seven key insights. This section revisits each and presents supporting commentary. Here is a summary list of the seven key findings:

1. Effective COIN practices tend to run in packs.
2. The balance of effective versus detrimental COIN practices explains the outcome of all 30 cases without recourse to narratives of exceptionality.
3. Strategic communication–related factors are among the positive practices in which successful COIN forces engage.
4. Poor beginnings do not necessary lead to poor ends.
5. Factors drawn from FM 3-24 (the COIN field manual) are among the positive practices in which successful COIN forces engage.
6. Repression wins phases but usually not cases.
7. Insurgent support (the insurgents' ability to replenish and gain personnel, materiel, finance, intelligence, and sanctuary) appears to be a critical center of gravity.

We discuss each of these findings in turn.

Effective COIN Practices Tend to Run in Packs

The core result of the earlier analysis, and the inspiration for the *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* title, was the observation that those who have defeated insurgencies historically have done not just a few things right but have done a host of things right, and that those who seek to repeat those historical success would do well to plan to do the same. This result stands up quite well to the expanded data. Most analyses include 28 COIN wins instead of the modest eight COIN wins from

the earlier study. In those 20 new wins, most of the COIN forces did many things right and few things wrong.

The good news analytically is that not all of them did more things right than those in the original data set. A few of the COIN forces in the new data set did fewer of the things broadly correlated with COIN success and still won, allowing greater analytic traction when trying to discern which of those things is most important or truly critical. The QCA presented in Chapter Four relies on increased numbers and a few more marginal wins to identify priority factors. Effective COIN practices still run in packs, but the core of the pack is flexibility and adaptability, commitment and motivation, tangible support reduction, unity of effort, initiative, and intelligence.

The Balance of Effective Versus Detrimental COIN Practices Explains the Outcome of All 30 Cases Without Recourse to Narratives of Exceptionality

The original *Victory* scorecard does not discriminate the full set of 71 cases into wins and losses, but it does a pretty good job: Only two of the 33 cases receiving negative scores (the “loss” threshold) on the original scorecard were COIN wins, and only three of the 22 cases receiving scorecard scores of five or more (the “win” threshold) were COIN losses, so it misclassified only five of 55 cases (with the other 16 cases falling in the gap between the scorecard’s win and loss thresholds). When the 11 cases fought against the tide of history are removed, the original scorecard misclassifies only three of the cases, and one of those is Colombia (La Violencia), which this analysis concludes does not belong in the core 59 cases because of its nearly indeterminate and somewhat capricious outcome.

However, a slightly revised scorecard *does* perfectly discriminate all 59 core cases into wins and losses based solely on their scores, without exception. It would discriminate all 71 cases, but there are exceptions: Cases fought against the tide of history and La Violencia. The section “Updates to the Scorecard,” later in this appendix, details the changes made to the original scorecard based on the expanded data set.

Strategic Communication–Related Factors Are Among the Positive Practices in Which Successful COIN Forces Engage

The full data show that the further one goes back in history, the more likely COIN forces are to focus exclusively on eliminating the insurgent threat (iron fist). Such approaches are unlikely to include strategic communication, but some of them are successful anyway. However, where it has been applied, strategic communication remains strongly correlated with COIN success. All cases in which three or more of the strategic communication factors appear are COIN wins. The finding from the original study needs to be rephrased to capture this additional nuance. Not all successful COIN forces use strategic communication, but all COIN forces that used strategic communication as part of their overall strategy were successful.

Poor Beginnings Do Not Necessarily Lead to Poor Ends

The expanded data set reinforces this finding. Many of the new cases include COIN forces that struggled in early phases but ultimately prevailed. Of the 29 cases won by the government (in the set of all 71 cases), only seven had the upper hand throughout the conflict (that is, they were scored as winning or having the better of a mixed outcome in all phases). Further, one of the findings from the current study is the criticality of COIN forces being of sufficient strength to be able to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas. While this factor was present in all 29 COIN wins, the factor was absent in many earlier phases, confirming that there is an opportunity to improve on a poor start.

Factors Drawn from FM 3-24 Are Among the Positive Practices in Which Successful COIN Forces Engage

Like strategic communication, FM 3-24 remains one of the COIN concepts strongly supported by these analyses. Also like strategic communication, FM 3-24 is not present in all wins, but all cases in which it is present (19 cases) were COIN force wins.

Repression Wins Phases but Usually Not Cases

The original study was particularly harsh on iron fist approaches, finding repression and collective punishment to be extremely poor COIN

practices—practices particularly common in cases in which a repressive government took the upper hand in an interim phase only to ultimately lose the case. The expanded data, going further back in history, was more kind to iron fist COIN. In 44 cases involving the iron fist strategy, fully 17 (38 percent) led to COIN wins. Repression and atrocities were usually part of these campaigns. While repression remains negatively correlated with success, the correlation is much smaller than that observed in the original study. While repression and the iron fist *can* win cases, they remain unambiguously poor choices relative to the host of alternative concepts available.

Insurgent Tangible Support Appears to Be a Critical Center of Gravity

One of the most interesting findings from *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* was that success in disrupting insurgent tangible support, by itself, perfectly discriminated the 30 original cases into wins and losses, and that tangible support was a better predictor of COIN success than popular support. While tangible support reduction no longer perfectly discriminates all of the cases, it remains a requirement for COIN success. Across all 71 cases, all COIN winners managed to reduce at least three of the ten tangible support factors, without exception. Tangible support remains one of the critical prime implicant factors identified using QCA.

Updates to the COIN Concepts

Victory Has a Thousand Fathers tested 20 “approaches” to COIN (referred to as COIN *concepts* in this study), 18 of which are common to the current study. This report tests 18 of the original 20, adds six, and modifies the factor stacks for ten of them. This section details the changes and omissions.

Eighteen of the 20 concepts tested in the original study are also tested here, but we omitted an entire subcategory of concepts, “insurgent approaches.” The original study included two insurgent concepts, “insurgent support strategies” and “continuation and contesta-

tion.” These were omitted from the present analyses for several reasons. The insurgent strategic concepts have always felt like apples among the oranges of COIN concepts; they are not alike. The focus of the broader research effort has always been on effective COIN practices and not on effective insurgent practices. The efforts and qualities of the insurgents have only ever been of interest to the extent that they affect or constrain the effectiveness of COIN practices. One of the more important, if more subtle, findings of the original study was that the strategies adopted by the insurgents do not cancel out or obviate any of the effective COIN concepts. Insurgent practices can make the job of the COIN force harder or easier, but they do not change the things the COIN force needs to do.² For the expanded effort, we scored an even wider range of insurgent behavior–related factors in case such factors would be necessary (see the list of all factors in Appendix E). Such factors were not necessary, at least not independent of COIN or government factors. We were able to meet all of our analytic objectives and answer all core research questions satisfactorily without ever making reference to factors related to the motivation or strategy of the insurgents. Some COIN-related factors are explicitly referential to qualities of the insurgency, such as the relative capability and motivation of government and insurgent troops, relative levels of collateral damage, which side took the initiative, and so on, but all of these relative factors fit within the broader realm of the insurgents’ choices, setting the bar for how difficult a desirable COIN force accomplishment was while not affecting the desirability of that accomplishment. While the question of which factors are correlated with insurgent success is an interesting one, it is not one of the questions addressed here. To avoid diminishing or distracting from the key insights of this research, we chose not to include insurgent strategies among the COIN concepts tested.

Ten of the 18 COIN concepts carried forward from the original study were modified in how they were measured here. These changes

² See the discussion in Chapter Four of *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Sources of Success in Counterinsurgency* (Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b), under the heading “Every Insurgency May Be Unique, but Not at This Level of Analysis.”

were the results of efforts to better represent the concepts, through improved understanding of the concepts themselves, improved factors with which to represent the concepts, or both. All changes are detailed here.

Changes to the Development Factor Stack

We added two new factors to the development factor stack to incorporate specific qualities of the development efforts undertaken. These were as follows:

- Planned reconstruction/development improvements were substantially above the historical baseline.
- Reconstruction/development met at least two of these criteria: based on popular demand, initiated mainly at the village level, used local labor/created local jobs, aimed at self-empowerment of people, and was sustainable.

Changes to the Pacification Factor Stack

We added three new factors to the pacification stack from new factors added to the data set. We added the same two development-related factors as were added to the development stack (given that pacification is a hybrid that includes development), and we also added a third factor connecting classic pacification with the more modern expression of clear, hold, and build. The three added factors are as follows:

- Planned reconstruction/development improvements were substantially above the historical baseline.
- The COIN force undertook all three of clear, hold, and build.
- Reconstruction/development met at least two of these criteria: based on popular demand, initiated mainly at the village level, used local labor/created local jobs, aimed at self-empowerment of people, and was sustainable.

Changes to the Legitimacy of Government Factor Stack

In the current study, we reduced legitimacy of government back to its essential core, just two factors:

- Government leaders were selected in a manner considered just and fair by the majority of the population in the area of conflict.
- The majority of citizens viewed the government as legitimate in the area of conflict.

Changes to the Legitimacy of the Use of Force Factor Stack

To update legitimacy of the use of force from the original analysis, we removed one factor and added two others. To reflect the fact that external COIN forces are not necessarily viewed as an illegitimate use of force (and because we treated cases with external forces as a wholly separate subpopulation), we removed the following factor:

- The COIN force was *not* viewed as an occupying force in the area of conflict

To broaden the range of possibly illegitimate applications of force, we added the following:

- The COIN force did *not* employ indiscriminate force.
- *No* COIN practices were beyond the pale by contemporary U.S. ethical standards.

Changes to the Amnesty/Rewards Factor Stack

We broadened the amnesty factor stack to include other aspects of post- or late-conflict DDR:

- The phase in question included significant DDR efforts beyond amnesty.

Changes to the Strategic Communication Factor Stack

In the present study, we refined strategic communication, removing two factors:

- The COIN force engaged in an earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort.
- The COIN force maintained unity of effort/unity of command.

Regarding the first, earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication effort, we removed it for two reasons. First, it ran slightly afoul of our general principles for factors; that is, it reflected effort (earnest effort) rather than accomplishment. Virtually all other factors concern what the COIN force was able to accomplish, not what it attempted. Second, ongoing thought on strategic communication suggests that it is the integration of actions and words that is critical, with the messaging component playing perhaps the smaller part.³ The five actors remaining in the stack better reflect this evolving thinking.

While unity of effort remains important to many proponents of strategic communication, several discussions of the original study revealed that many readers saw it as an odd fit, given the prominence of unity of effort as an independent traditional military virtue (with virtues well beyond improving strategic communication). For that reason, we have removed it from the strategic communication stack and analyzed it as its own concept, unity of effort (see Chapter Four).

Changes to the “Beat-Cop” Factor Stack

Based on the new factors and data in the current effort, we added four factors and combined two already in the stack into a single factor. Previously, “beat cop” had included the presence of militias but did not distinguish those militias working at cross-purposes as a single factor. This was replaced by the following:

- The COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas that it controlled or claimed to control *and* militias/local irregular forces did not work at cross-purposes with the COIN force or government.

Further, we added these four new factors as representative of the concept:

- COIN forces employed “counter-gangs,” “scouts,” or “ferret forces.”

³ See, for example, Christopher Paul, *Strategic Communication: Origins, Concepts, and Current Debates*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2011.

- The COIN force included significant numbers of largely effective police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional personnel.
- The government employed significant numbers of locally recruited military/paramilitary/militia/police forces.
- COIN forces primarily deployed in a space-domination/passive-presence role.

Changes to the “Boots on the Ground” Factor Stack

To expand and refine the “boots on the ground” concept, we added two factors:

- The COIN force included significant numbers of largely effective police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional personnel.
- COIN forces primarily deployed in a space-domination/passive-presence role.

Changes to the “Put a Local Face on It” Factor Stack

To attempt to refine this factor stack, we once again combined the militias present and the militias not working at cross-purposes factors into the following:

- The COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas that it controlled or claimed to control *and* these militias did not work at cross-purposes with COIN force or government.

We also added two factors that further reflect the degree of local versus external involvement:

- The COIN force included significant numbers of largely effective police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional personnel who were locally recruited.
- Development was not predominantly provided by (or perceived as being provided by) an external actor.

Changes to the Cultural Awareness Factor Stack

To expand the cultural awareness factor stack, we added three more factors that reflect different possible ways to run afoul of this principle:

- The government did not sponsor or protect unpopular economic and social arrangements or cultural institutions.
- The government did not repress and/or exclude significant societal groups from state power or resources.
- Force protection actions by external COIN forces (if present) did not alienate the population.

Further note that the empirical cut points for some factor stacks changed from those identified in the original study based on patterns observed in the full data, even while the specific factors in the factor stack remained unchanged.

Updates to the Scorecard

The original COIN scorecard developed for *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* contained 15 good factors and 12 bad factors, the difference of which perfectly discriminated the 30 original cases into wins and losses. The original scorecard factors are presented in Table D.1.

Unfortunately, as discussed earlier in this appendix, the original scorecard was unable to perfectly discriminate all of the cases in the current study into wins and losses, so we sought to revise it so that it would. As described in Chapter Five, we followed a process similar to the one used to develop the original scorecard. We began by examining the bivariate relationships between each scorecard factor and the case outcomes for each of the 59 core cases. This allowed us to quickly identify individual factors that were no longer particularly strong discriminators, factors that we would seek to remove from the scorecard and replace as needed. Table D.2 lists the factors removed.

With the weak links removed from the scorecard, we sought additional candidates. As we had done to build the original scorecard, we identified factors that the literature led us to expect to be positively

Table D.1
COIN Scorecard from *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers*

15 Good COIN Practices	12 Bad COIN Practices
The COIN force realized at least two strategic communication factors.	The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression.
The COIN force reduced at least three tangible support factors.	The primary COIN force was an external occupier.
The government realized at least two government legitimacy factors.	COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents.
The government realized at least one democracy factor.	Militias worked at cross-purposes with the COIN force or government.
The COIN force realized at least one intelligence factor.	The COIN force resettled or removed civilian populations for population control.
The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas.	COIN force collateral damage was perceived by the population in the area of conflict as worse than the insurgents'.
The government/state was competent.	In the area of conflict, the COIN force was perceived as worse than the insurgents.
The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate application of force.	The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.
The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.	The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents.
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force.	The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.
The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force.	The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustainment.
The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas.	The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment.
The COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance.	
The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control.	
The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.	

SOURCE: Paul, Clarke, and Grill, 2010b, p. xvii, Table S.1.

Table D.2**Factors Removed from the *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers* COIN Scorecard (in red)**

15 Good COIN Practices	12 Bad COIN Practices
The COIN force realized at least two strategic communication factors.	The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression.
The COIN force reduced at least three tangible support factors.	The primary COIN force was an external occupier.
The government realized at least two government legitimacy factors.	COIN force or government actions contributed to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents.
The government realized at least one democracy factor.	Militias worked at cross-purposes with the COIN force or government.
The COIN force realized at least one intelligence factor.	The COIN force resettled or removed civilian populations for population control.
The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas.	COIN force collateral damage was perceived by the population in the area of conflict as worse than the insurgents'.
The government/state was competent.	In the area of conflict, the COIN force was perceived as worse than the insurgents.
The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate application of force.	The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.
The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.	The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents.
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force.	The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.
The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force.	The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustainment.
The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas.	The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment.
The COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance.	
The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control.	
The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.	

associated with COIN success and flagged them for consideration as “good practice” candidates. We then identified factors that the literature led us to expect to be negatively associated with COIN success and flagged those as possible additions to the list of bad practices. We added those with the strongest relationships to the list, using our expert discretion to eliminate factors that were largely redundant with factors already in the list. We also revised all COIN concept-related factor stacks to correspond with the factor stacks used in the current study (changed as described earlier in this appendix). This affected two of the scorecard factors, “COIN force realized at least two strategic communication factors” and “government realized at least one government legitimacy factor.” Table D.3 shows the new list of scorecard factors—15 good factors or practices and 11 bad, with the new or changed factors highlighted in green.

Table D.3
Revised COIN Scorecard (additions and changes in green)

15 Good COIN Practices	11 Bad COIN Practices
The COIN force realized at least two strategic communication factors (factor list revised).	The COIN force used both collective punishment and escalating repression.
The COIN force reduced at least three tangible support factors.	There was corrupt and arbitrary personalistic government rule.
The government realized at least one government legitimacy factors (factor list revised).	Host-nation elites had perverse incentives to continue the conflict.
Government corruption was reduced/good governance increased since the onset of the conflict.	An external professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of the insurgents.
The COIN force realized at least one intelligence factor.	The host nation was economically dependent on external supporters.
The COIN force was of sufficient strength to force the insurgents to fight as guerrillas.	Fighting was initiated primarily by the insurgents.
Unity of effort/unity of command was maintained.	The COIN force failed to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics.
The COIN force avoided excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate application of force.	The COIN force engaged in more coercion or intimidation than the insurgents.
The COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with the population in the area of conflict.	The insurgent force was individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated.
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure or development, or property reform occurred in the area of conflict controlled or claimed by the COIN force.	The COIN force or its allies relied on looting for sustenance.
The majority of the population in the area of conflict supported or favored the COIN force.	The COIN force and government had different goals or levels of commitment.
The COIN force established and then expanded secure areas.	
Government/COIN reconstruction/development sought/achieved improvements that were substantially above the historical baseline.	
The COIN force provided or ensured the provision of basic services in areas that it controlled or claimed to control.	
The perception of security was created or maintained among the population in areas that the COIN force claimed to control.	

List of All Factors Scored for All Cases

Table E.1 lists all of the factors scored for each phase of each of the 71 cases that make up the data set for this report. Full data on each case are available in the accompanying spreadsheet. In addition to listing the factor, Table E.1 lists the factor number (indicating the order in which factors are presented in the accompanying spreadsheet); whether the factor was scored at the phase level (P) or case level (C), and thus the same for all phases in a case; and the scale for the factor's scoring. Common scales are as follows:

- (0, 1), which indicates a binary factor
- categorical, which indicates values in categories
- free prose, which indicates a short narrative explanation or answer
- (0, 1, -1, 7), where 0 indicates absent and 1 indicates present for the COIN force/government, -1 indicates present for the insurgents, and 7 indicates present for both the COIN force and the insurgents.¹

¹ When factors were scored using (0, 1, -1, 7) it was because doing otherwise would have necessitated separate factors for the COIN force and the insurgents. That said, many factors have been divided into two (0, 1) factors as a way to encode the same amount of information.

Table E.1
All Factors in the Data, with Factor Number, Scope, and Scale

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force	f1	P	0, 1
In area of conflict, COIN force <i>not</i> perceived as worse than insurgents	f2	P	0, 1
Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claimed to control	f3	P	0, 1
COIN force established and then expanded secure areas	f4	P	0, 1
Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict	f5	P	0, 1
COIN force provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas it controlled or claimed to control	f6	P	0, 1
Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict	f7	P	0, 1
Majority of citizens in area of conflict viewed government as legitimate	f8	P	0, 1
COIN force <i>not</i> viewed as an occupying force in area of conflict	f9	P	0, 1
Government provided better governance than insurgents in area of conflict	f10	P	0, 1
COIN force <i>avoided</i> excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force	f11	P	0, 1
COIN force collateral damage <i>not</i> perceived by population in area of conflict as worse than insurgents'	f12	P	0, 1
Government a functional democracy	f13	P	0, 1
Government a partial or transitional democracy	f14	P	0,1
Free and fair elections held	f15	P	0, 1
Government respected human rights and allowed free press	f16	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
COIN force resettled/removed civilian populations for population control	f17	P	0, 1
COIN force efforts resulted in increased costs for insurgents	f18	P	0, 1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent recruiting	f19	P	0, 1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent materiel acquisition	f20	P	0, 1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent intelligence	f21	P	0, 1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent financing	f22	P	0, 1
COIN force effectively disrupted insurgent command and control	f23	P	0, 1
Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	f24	P	0, 1
COIN force employed escalating repression	f25	P	0, 1
COIN force employed collective punishment	f26	P	0, 1
Amnesty or reward program in place	f27	P	0, 1
Amnesty program reduced number of insurgents	f28	P	0, 1
COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises)	f29	P	0, 1
COIN force maintained credibility with population in area of conflict (includes expectation management)	f30	P	0, 1
Messages/themes cohered with overall COIN approach	f31	P	0, 1
Messages/themes coordinated for all involved government agencies	f32	P	0, 1
Earnest IO/PSYOP/strategic communication/messaging effort	f33	P	0, 1
Unity of effort/unity of command maintained (government and COIN force)	f34	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
COIN force avoided creating unattainable expectations	f35	P	0, 1
Insurgents' grievances substantially addressed since onset of conflict	f36	P	0, 1
COIN force received substantial intelligence from population in area of conflict	f37	P	0, 1
Majority of population in area of conflict supported/favored COIN force (wanted it to win)	f38	P	0, 1
COIN force sought to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict	f39	P	0, 1
COIN force avoided culturally offensive behaviors and messages	f40	P	0, 1
COIN force employed local militias or irregular forces or engaged in/enabled community policing in areas it controlled or claimed to control	f41	P	0, 1
Militias/local irregular forces did <i>not</i> work at cross-purposes with COIN force/government	f42	P	0, 1
No parts of the area of conflict were no-go or otherwise denied to COIN force	f43	P	0, 1
COIN force did <i>not</i> employ culturally inappropriate outsiders for a significant fraction of operations	f44	P	0, 1
Indigenous forces conducted majority of COIN operations	f45	P	0, 1
COIN force or government actions did <i>not</i> contribute to substantial new grievances claimed by the insurgents	f46	P	0, 1
Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced	f47	P	0, 1
Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced	f48	P	0, 1
Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size	f49	P	0, 1
Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	f50	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms	f51	P	0, 1
Intelligence adequate to allow COIN forces to disrupt insurgent processes or operations	f52	P	0, 1
COIN force <i>failed</i> to adapt to changes in insurgent strategy, operations, or tactics	f53	P	0, 1
Insurgents demonstrated potency through impressive or spectacular attacks	f54	P	0, 1
Insurgents provided or ensured provision of basic services in areas they controlled or claimed to control	f55	P	0, 1
Insurgents discredited/delegitimized COIN force/ government	f56	P	0, 1
Insurgents made critical strategic errors, failed to make obvious adaptations, or voluntarily exited the conflict	f57	P	0, 1
COIN force engaged in more coercion/ intimidation than insurgents	f58	P	0, 1
Insurgents delegitimized due to civilian casualties or other unacceptable behavior	f59	P	0, 1
Security of population in area of conflict improved from previous phase	f60	P	0, 1
External support to COIN from strong state/ military	f61	P	0, 1
External support to insurgents from strong state/ military	f62	P	0, 1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of government	f63	P	0, 1
External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents	f64	P	0, 1
COIN force (and allies) and insurgents (and allies) lacked sophisticated modern military equipment and vehicles	f65	P	0, 1
COIN force (and allies) had significant military equipment mismatch dominance over insurgents (and allies)	f66	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
COIN force had and used uncontested air dominance	f67	P	0, 1
COIN force had air superiority, but use of airspace was significantly contested or COIN force was unable take advantage of air power	f68	P	0, 1
COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas (or to prevail in the preponderance of conventional engagements, should overmatched insurgents choose to give battle)	f69	P	0, 1
Insurgent force individually superior to the COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated	f70	P	0, 1
COIN force or allies relied on looting for sustainment	f71	P	0, 1
COIN force and government had different goals/ levels of commitment or both had relatively low levels of commitment	f72	P	0, 1
Government/state was competent	f73	P	0, 1
COIN or insurgent actions precipitated (or constituted) ethnic or religious violence	f74	P	0, 1
Expropriable cash crops or mineral wealth in area of conflict	f75	P	0, 1
Decisive (probably terminal, but not necessarily) phase of case	f76	P	0, 1
Government/COIN win	f77	P	0, 1
Insurgent win	f78	P	0, 1
Mixed outcome	f79	P	0, 1
<i>Why</i> flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased or remained dramatically reduced or largely absent	f80	P	Free prose
COIN force employed indiscriminate force	f81	P	0, 1
COIN force employed substantial indirect fire (air strikes, artillery, or both)	f82	P	0, 1
Active minority in area of conflict supported/ favored COIN force or insurgents (wanted them to win)	f83	P	0, 1, -1, 7

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
<i>Details</i> of insurgents' critical strategic errors, failure to make obvious adaptations, or voluntary exit from conflict	f84	P	Free prose
<i>Why</i> insurgents were unable to maintain or grow force size	f85	P	Categorical
<i>Why</i> insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished	f86	P	Categorical
Change in level of popular support for insurgents	f87	P	1, 0, -1
<i>Why</i> level of popular support for insurgents changed	f88	P	Free prose
Change in level of popular support for COIN force/government	f89	P	1, 0, -1
<i>Why</i> level of popular support for COIN force/government changed	f90	P	Free prose
Phase included significant DDR efforts beyond amnesty	f91	P	0, 1
Former Soviet country	f92	C	0, 1
Insurgency followed a coup or was a counterrevolution	f93	C	0, 1
Insurgency followed withdrawal of a colonial power	f94	C	0, 1
Conflict caused significant host-nation economic disruption	f95	P	0, 1
Conclusion/suspension externally imposed or due to international pressure or other exogenous event	f96	P	0, 1
Conclusion/suspension substantially due to withdrawal of international support for one or both sides	f97	P	0, 1
Conclusion/suspension driven by withdrawal of support to which side?	f97a	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Level of violence low/manageable	f98	P	0, 1
External support continued to sustain conflict that otherwise would likely have ended	f99	P	0, 1
High levels of sectarian or other identity-based tension in area of conflict	f100	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Grievances leading to initial insurgency substantially resolved, with such reforms as government programs to improve the political process, establishment of an impartial and credible judicial system, reduction of corruption, improved economy, and efforts to address religious or cultural discrimination or to remove other sources of dissatisfaction that caused part of the population to side with the insurgents	f101	P	0, 1
Postconflict government fragile/weak/unstable	f102	C	0, 1
Insurgency followed by another insurgency, significant terrorism campaign, or other conflict fomented by the same (or lineal) insurgent group	f103	C	0, 1
Insurgency followed by another insurgency, significant terrorism campaign, or other conflict fomented by a different insurgent group	f104	C	0, 1
Insurgency followed by another insurgency, significant terrorism campaign, or other conflict due to a new grievance (core grievances differed from those motivating the previous insurgency)	f105	C	0, 1
Number of years between conclusion of this insurgency and onset of new conflict (or time until end of 2010)	f106	C	Number (in years)
Resolution followed by a next conflict (0 indicates right-censored)	f106a	C	0, 1
Postconflict government a power-sharing government, with some kind of representation by both sides in the conflict	f107	C	0, 1
External power (whether involved in the conflict or not) provided support to victor following the end of the insurgency	f108	C	0, 1
Postconflict government democratic	f110	C	0, 1
Extranational peacekeeping forces present after conflict	f111	C	0, 1
Primary COIN focus on eliminating insurgent threat	f112	P	0, 1
Primary COIN focus on diminishing motive for insurgency	f113	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
COIN efforts balanced between eliminating immediate threat and diminishing motive for insurgency (one could still be primary while the other is sufficiently emphasized to constitute balance)	f114	P	0, 1
COIN campaign included significant (not necessarily primary) focus on physically denying the insurgents access to supportive populations (for example, through removal/resettlement or interdiction)	f114a	P	0, 1
COIN force and government employed an integrated political and military strategy	f115	P	0, 1
Military goals routinely took precedence over political goals	f116	P	0, 1
Significant government reforms since onset of conflict	f117	P	0, 1
Significant ethical/professional/human rights–related military reforms since onset of conflict	f118	P	0, 1
Significant government or military reforms in phase	f119	P	0, 1
Reforms recognized/appreciated by population in area of conflict	f120	P	0, 1
Government sponsorship or protection of unpopular economic and social arrangements or cultural institutions	f121	P	0, 1
Government repression and/or exclusion of significant societal groups from state power or resources	f122	P	0, 1
Government maintained weak policing capacity and infrastructural power	f123	P	0, 1
Corrupt and arbitrary personalistic government rule	f124	P	0, 1
Government had insufficient ministerial capacity to manage/direct foreign aid	f125	P	0, 1
Planned reconstruction/development improvements substantially above historical baseline (trying to “reconstruct” to a level not previously achieved)	f126	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Reconstruction/development succeeded in bringing significant portions of the area of conflict to a level of development above preconflict baseline	f127	P	0, 1
Development provided by (or perceived as being provided by) . . .	f128	P	Categorical
Number of these five reconstruction/development criteria met: based on popular demand, initiated mainly at the village level, used local labor/created local jobs, aimed at self-empowerment of the people, was sustainable (score 0–5)	f129	P	0–5
Reconstruction/development aid was destabilizing because it dislocated trade patterns/alienated powerful economic interests	f130	P	0, 1
Reconstruction/development aid welcomed by population but rejected out of fear of insurgent reprisals for accepting aid from “occupiers”	f131	P	0, 1
Significant fraction of development funds squandered, through corruption or through uncompleted or useless projects (or both)	f132	P	0, 1
COIN force employed practices considered beyond the pale by contemporary U.S. ethical standards	f133	P	0, 1
<i>What practices?</i>	f134	P	Categorical
<i>What principles motivated COIN force’s employment of practices beyond the pale by contemporary U.S. ethical standards?</i>	f135	P	Categorical
COIN force undertook “clear” of “clear, hold, and build” in area of conflict	f136	P	0, 1
COIN force undertook “hold” of “clear, hold, and build” in area of conflict	f137	P	0, 1
COIN force undertook “build” of “clear, hold, and build” in area of conflict	f138	P	0, 1
Resettled population provided with reasonable standard of living (as opposed to level of typical refugee camp or worse)	f140	P	0, 1
Census taken/used for population control	f141	P	0, 1
ID cards issued/checkpoints established for population control	f142	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Curfews established for population control	f143	P	0, 1
Conflict primarily urban	f144	P	0, 1
Conflict had significant urban component	f145	P	0, 1
Terrain played a major role in conflict	f146	P	0, 1
Type of terrain that played a major role in conflict	f147	P	Categorical
Terrain played a major role because it provided sanctuary for the insurgents (COIN forces could not/would not enter terrain)	f148	P	0, 1
Terrain played a major role because it concealed the insurgents from the air	f149	P	0, 1
Terrain played a major role because it made it difficult for COIN force to maneuver and stretched COIN force logistics	f150	P	0, 1
Terrain played a major role because it allowed insurgents to avoid/overcome COIN force firepower or vehicle advantages	f151	P	0, 1
Terrain played a major role for another reason	f152	P	0, 1
Primary COIN force composed of conscripts	f154	P	0, 1
COIN force included significant numbers of police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional personnel	f155	P	0, 1
Police, paramilitary, militia, or other nonconventional personnel largely absent or ineffective because of poor training, poor armament (relative to the insurgents), cowardice, corruption, human rights abuses, or other reasons	f155a	P	0, 1
Government employed significant numbers of locally recruited military/paramilitary/militia/police forces (i.e., from the areas in which they operated)	f156	P	0, 1
COIN forces primarily deployed in a space-domination/passive-presence role	f159	P	0, 1
Effective coordination between diverse COIN forces (e.g., police, paramilitary, various military forces, different country forces)	f160	P	0, 1
COIN force morale remained high throughout the phase	f161	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
COIN force employed “counter-gangs,” “scouts,” or “ferret forces” against insurgents	f162	P	0, 1
COIN force was an alliance or coalition of other countries’ forces (if significant external COIN force was involved)	f163	P	0, 1
Extent of threat to government	f164	P	Categorical
Rough population, in thousands	f165	start of C	Approximate number (in thousands)
Geographic area, in approximate sq km	f166	start of C	Approximate number (in sq km)
Level of development (high, medium, low)	f168	start of C	Categorical
Scope of conflict	f169	P	Categorical
Fighting in phase primarily force-on-force conventional engagement	f170	P	0, 1
Fighting in phase primarily COIN force using conventional forces to hammer insurgents, who mostly fled	f171	P	0, 1
Fighting in phase primarily guerrilla/terrorist/ small-unit engagement (even if COIN forces deployed/operated in large conventional formations)	f172	P	0, 1
Fighting in phase substantially balanced between conventional and small-unit engagement (hybrid)	f173	P	0, 1
Fighting in phase primarily initiated by insurgents	f174	P	0, 1
Fighting in phase primarily initiated by COIN force	f175	P	0, 1
Insurgency motive: religious	f176	P	0, 1
Insurgency motive: secessionist	f177	P	0, 1
Insurgency motive: war of liberation/ independence	f178	P	0, 1
Insurgency motive: ethno-nationalist	f179	P	0, 1
Insurgency motive: greed	f180	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Insurgency motive: grievance	f181	P	0, 1
Insurgency motive: opportunity	f182	P	0, 1
Insurgency motive: ideological	f183	P	0, 1
Insurgency motive: counterrevolutionary/restorative	f184	P	0, 1
Insurgency motive: no clear motive	f185	P	0, 1
Insurgency motive: multiple insurgencies with different mixes of motives	f186	P	0, 1
Government type: mature democracy	f187	P	0, 1
Government type: partial/transitional democracy	f188	P	0, 1
Government type: authoritarian	f189	P	0, 1
Government type: theocracy	f190	P	0, 1
Government type: communist	f191	P	0, 1
Government type: anocracy	f192	P	0, 1
Government type: imperial/colonial	f193	P	0, 1
Government type: monarchy	f194	P	0, 1
Government type: oligarchy	f195	P	0, 1
Government type: kleptocracy	f196	P	0, 1
Government type: transitional government	f197	P	0, 1
Government type: strongman	f198	P	0, 1
Government type: minority	f199	P	0, 1
Government type: power-sharing	f200	P	0, 1
Type of external participant: alliance/coalition force	f201	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external participant: major power	f202	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external participant: minor/regional power	f203	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external participant: diaspora/refugees	f204	P	0, 1, -1, 7

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Type of external participant: terrorist/insurgent group	f205	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external participant: wealthy/influential individuals	f206	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external participant: nongovernmental organizations/charities/lobbies	f207	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external participant: private security contractors/mercenaries	f208	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external participant: peacekeeping force	f209	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: balance of power	f210	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: colonialism/decolonization	f211	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: religious affinity	f212	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: co-ethnic group	f213	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: resource plunder/exploitation	f214	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: global/regional influence or regional power struggle	f215	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: stabilization/destabilization	f216	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: regime change	f217	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: revenge/payback	f218	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: curry favor with opposition	f219	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: internal security/prophylaxis	f220	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: prestige	f221	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: irredentism	f222	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: ideology	f223	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Motives for external participant: money/pay	f224	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Major external participant switched sides during (or at end of) phase	f225	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Type of external support included: safe haven/transit	f226	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external support included: logistics	f227	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external support included: fighters	f228	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external support included: public relations/propaganda/diplomatic	f229	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external support included: sanctions, serious political pressure	f230	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external support included: funding/financing	f231	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external support included: command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR)	f232	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external support included: training and/or advice (military advisers)	f233	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external support included: direct military support (troops)	f234	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external support included: weapons/materiel	f235	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Type of external support included: peacekeeping, peace enforcement, area interdiction, area security, or other activities involving troops deployed not for direct military support or an advisory mission	f236	P	0, 1, -1, 7
Overall importance of external support to conflict: critical/game changer	f237	P	0, 1
Overall importance of external support to conflict: valuable/significant	f238	P	0, 1
Overall importance of external support to conflict: minor	f239	P	0, 1
Overall importance of external support to conflict: counterproductive	f240	P	0, 1
Overall importance of external support to conflict: neutral/negligible/none	f241	P	0, 1
Regional interests of external actor supporting COIN and the government predominantly aligned	f242	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Host-nation elites had perverse incentives to continue conflict	f243	P	0, 1
<i>Detail</i> on perverse incentives of host-nation elites	f244	P	Categorical
Host nation economically dependent on external actor	f245	P	0, 1
External actor forces suffered majority of combat casualties of overall COIN force	f246	P	0,1
External actor provided majority of the funding for the overall COIN effort	f247	P	0, 1
Relationship between external and host-nation forces	f248	P	Categorical
Military action outside of host-nation borders (if insurgents relied on cross-border support or havens)	f249	P	0, 1
Military action outside host-nation borders effective in reducing external havens/support	f250	P	0, 1
Insurgents exploited deep-seated/intractable issues to gain legitimacy	f251	P	0, 1
Insurgents employed unconstrained violence (against civilians) to create or sustain insecurity and instability (purposely or otherwise)	f252	P	0, 1
Insurgent leadership competent, able to develop and change strategy and ensure succession	f253	P	0, 1
Government/COIN force's willingness to take casualties was high	f254	P	0, 1
External COIN force's willingness to take casualties was high	f255	P	0, 1
Insurgents switched from guerrilla to conventional tactics	f256	P	0, 1
Insurgents' switch to conventional tactics unsustainable (COIN forces able to prevail in vast majority of engagements)	f257	P	0, 1
Insurgents switched from conventional to guerrilla tactics	f258	P	0, 1
Insurgents forcibly recruited from civilian population	f259	P	0, 1

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Insurgents mostly avoided engaging in large-scale operations against better-equipped regular troops and resorted primarily to guerrilla tactics (e.g., sniping, sabotage, small-scale ambushes/hit-and-run attacks, IEDs)	f260	P	0, 1
COIN force attempted to use overwhelming force	f261	P	0, 1
Successful use of overwhelming force	f262	P	0, 1
Majority of population recognized need for occupation (perhaps because ravaged by war and cognizant of needs for reconstruction)	f263	P	0, 1
Shared perception by government and external participant of a common threat to the occupied area	f264	P	0, 1
Occupied population accepted claim of occupier intent to withdraw its troops under attainable circumstances as credible	f265	P	0, 1
External occupier was invited into country by government	f266	P	0, 1
Occupying troops and occupied population had predominantly different religions	f267	P	0, 1
Occupation/outside intervention created legitimacy gaps exploited by insurgents	f268	P	0, 1
Force protection actions by external forces, such as roadblocks and vehicle convoys traveling at high speeds, alienated the population	f269	P	0, 1
Newly included case (0 denotes case from original set of 30)	f270	C	0, 1
Case fought against the tide of history (end of colonialism, end of apartheid)	f271	C	0, 1
External actor primary COIN force in phase	f272	P	0, 1
Length of phase, in months	f273	P	Number (in months)
Time from start of conflict to end of phase, in months	endtime	P	Number (in months)
Reason for phase change	f274	P	Categorical

Table E.1—Continued

Factor	Factor Number	Scored at Case or Phase Level	Scale
Host nation was a foreign power (colonial, imperial, occupier)	f275	P	0, 1
<i>At end of conflict</i> , separatists got: their own country or de facto administratively separate territory	f276	C	0, 1
<i>At end of conflict</i> , separatists got: regional autonomy, but were still administratively part of host nation (and payed host-nation taxes)	f277	C	0, 1
<i>At end of conflict</i> , separatists got: improved recognition, representation, fairness, or other redress of grievances short of real regional autonomy	f278	C	0, 1
External actor fought/supported another significant conflict or COIN force	f279	P	0, 1
An external actor provided significant financial and materiel support to COIN force/government	f280	P	0, 1
An external actor provided significant number of advisers/logisticians to COIN force/government	f281	P	0, 1
An external actor provided significant direct military support (troops, air power) to COIN force/government	f282	P	0, 1
Islamic insurgency	f283	P	0, 1
Communist insurgency	f284	P	0, 1
External actor's significant direct military support was limited to air power/SOF only—no external conventional ground maneuver forces	f285	P	0, 1
External primary COIN force drew down or left prior to end of conflict	f286	C	0, 1
External COIN force left government to its own devices	f287	C	0, 1
Departing external COIN force transitioned to government forces with good prospects for success	f288	C	0, 1
"Good" win—COIN force won in a stable, lasting way (holistic assessment)	f289	C	0, 1

COIN Scorecard

Scorecard of Good Versus Bad COIN Practices and Factors

Good Factors	A	B	C
1. COIN force realizes at least two strategic communication factors (Score 1 if sum of a through e is at least 2)			
a. COIN force and government actions consistent with messages (delivering on promises) (Score 1 if YES)			
b. COIN force maintains credibility with population in the area of conflict (includes expectation management) (Score 1 if YES)			
c. Messages/themes coherent with overall COIN approach (Score 1 if YES)			
d. COIN force avoids creating unattainable expectations (Score 1 if YES)			
e. Themes and messages coordinated for all involved government agencies (Score 1 if YES)			
2. COIN force reduces at least three tangible support factors (Score 1 if sum of a through j is at least 3)			
a. Flow of cross-border insurgent support significantly decreased, remains dramatically reduced, or largely absent (Score 1 if YES)			
b. Important external support to insurgents significantly reduced (Score 1 if YES)			
c. Important internal support to insurgents significantly reduced (Score 1 if YES)			
d. Insurgents' ability to replenish resources significantly diminished (Score 1 if YES)			
e. Insurgents unable to maintain or grow force size (Score 1 if YES)			
f. COIN force efforts resulting in increased costs for insurgent processes (Score 1 if YES)			
g. COIN forces effectively disrupt insurgent recruiting (Score 1 if YES)			
h. COIN forces effectively disrupt insurgent materiel acquisition (Score 1 if YES)			
i. COIN forces effectively disrupt insurgent intelligence (Score 1 if YES)			
j. COIN forces effectively disrupt insurgent financing (Score 1 if YES)			
3. Government realizes at least one government legitimacy factor (Score 1 if sum of a and b is at least 1)			
a. Government leaders selected in a manner considered just and fair by majority of population in area of conflict (Score 1 if YES)			
b. Majority of citizens in the area of conflict view government as legitimate (Score 1 if YES)			

Good Factors—Continued	A	B	C
4. Government corruption reduced/good governance increased since onset of conflict (Score 1 if YES)			
5. COIN force realizes at least one intelligence factor (Score 1 if sum of a and b is at least 1)			
a. Intelligence adequate to support kill/capture or engagements on COIN force's terms (Score 1 if YES)			
b. Intelligence adequate to allow COIN force to disrupt insurgent processes or operations (Score 1 if YES)			
6. COIN force of sufficient strength to force insurgents to fight as guerrillas (Score 1 if YES)			
7. Unity of effort/unity of command maintained (Score 1 if YES)			
8. COIN force avoids excessive collateral damage, disproportionate use of force, or other illegitimate applications of force (Score 1 if YES)			
9. COIN force seeks to engage and establish positive relations with population in area of conflict (Score 1 if YES)			
10. Short-term investments, improvements in infrastructure/development, or property reform in area of conflict controlled or claimed by COIN force (Score 1 if YES)			
11. Majority of population in area of conflict supports/favors COIN forces (Score 1 if YES)			
12. COIN force establishes and then expands secure areas (Score 1 if YES)			
13. Government/COIN force reconstruction/development sought/achieved improvements substantially above historical baseline (Score 1 if YES)			
14. COIN force provides or ensures provision of basic services in areas it controls or claims to control (Score 1 if YES)			
15. Perception of security created or maintained among population in areas COIN force claims to control (Score 1 if YES)			
Total positive score (Sum of 1–15)			

Bad Factors	A	B	C
1. COIN force uses both collective punishment and escalating repression (Score 1 if sum of a and b is at least 1)			
a. COIN force employs escalating repression (Score 1 if YES)			
b. COIN force employs collective punishment (Score 1 if YES)			
2. Government involves corrupt and personalistic rule (Score 1 if YES)			
3. Country elites have perverse incentives to continue conflict (Score 1 if YES)			
4. External professional military engaged in fighting on behalf of insurgents (Score 1 if YES)			
5. Host nation is economically dependent on external supporters (Score 1 if YES)			
6. Fighting primarily initiated by the insurgents (Score 1 if YES)			
7. COIN force fails to adapt to changes in adversary strategy, operations, or tactics (Score 1 if YES)			
8. COIN force engages in more coercion/intimidation than insurgents (Score 1 if YES)			
9. Insurgent force individually superior to COIN force by being either more professional or better motivated (Score 1 if YES)			
10. COIN force or allies rely on looting for sustainment (Score 1 if YES)			
11. COIN force and government have different goals/level of commitment (Score 1 if YES)			
Total negative score (Sum of 1–11)			
Final score (Good minus Bad)			

Key:

Total > 1 = History says, “You are on the path to victory.”

Total < 0 = History says, “You are in trouble.”

Scorecard Scores for the 59 Core Cases

Table G.1 lists the scorecard scores and outcomes for the 59 core cases.

Table G.1
Countries, Date Spans, Scorecard Scores, and Outcomes for the 59 Core
Case Studies in the Decisive Phase of Each Case

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Good COIN Practices	Bad COIN Practices	Total Score	Outcome
South Vietnam	1960–1975	0	–11	–11	COIN loss
Somalia	1980–1991	0	–9	–9	COIN loss
Afghanistan (post-Soviet)	1992–1996	0	–9	–9	COIN loss
Kosovo	1996–1999	0	–8	–8	COIN loss
Liberia	1989–1997	1	–9	–8	COIN loss
Cambodia	1967–1975	0	–7	–7	COIN loss
Moldova	1990–1992	1	–8	–7	COIN loss
Georgia/Abkhazia	1992–1994	0	–7	–7	COIN loss
Zaire (anti-Mobutu)	1996–1997	0	–7	–7	COIN loss
Nicaragua (Somoza)	1978–1979	0	–6	–6	COIN loss
Chechnya I	1994–1996	1	–7	–6	COIN loss
Bosnia	1992–1995	0	–6	–6	COIN loss
Laos	1960–1975	2	–7	–5	COIN loss
Nagorno-Karabakh	1992–1994	0	–5	–5	COIN loss
Democratic Republic of the Congo (anti-Kabila)	1998–2003	1	–5	–4	COIN loss
Rwanda	1990–1994	2	–6	–4	COIN loss
Bangladesh	1971	2	–6	–4	COIN loss
Afghanistan (Taliban)	1996–2001	2	–6	–4	COIN loss
Kampuchea	1978–1992	0	–3	–3	COIN loss
Cuba	1956–1959	3	–6	–3	COIN loss
Eritrea	1961–1991	1	–4	–3	COIN loss
Sudan (SPLA)	1984–2004	1	–4	–3	COIN loss
Afghanistan (anti-Soviet)	1978–1992	2	–5	–3	COIN loss
Burundi	1993–2003	1	–3	–2	COIN loss
Yemen	1962–1970	1	–3	–2	COIN loss
Lebanese Civil War	1975–1990	5	–7	–2	COIN loss
Tajikistan	1992–1997	2	–4	–2	COIN loss
Nepal	1997–2006	3	–4	–1	COIN loss
Indonesia (East Timor)	1975–2000	3	–4	–1	COIN loss

Table G.1—Continued

Country (Insurgency)	Years	Good COIN Practices	Bad COIN Practices	Total Score	Outcome
Nicaragua (Contras)	1981–1990	3	–4	–1	COIN loss
Papua New Guinea	1988–1998	2	–3	–1	COIN loss
Iraqi Kurdistan	1961–1975	4	–2	2	COIN win
Western Sahara	1975–1991	4	–2	2	COIN win
Argentina	1969–1979	5	–2	3	COIN win
Oman	1957–1959	4	–1	3	COIN win
Croatia	1992–1995	5	–2	3	COIN win
Guatemala	1960–1996	8	–4	4	COIN win
Tibet	1956–1974	7	–3	4	COIN win
Sri Lanka	1976–2009	6	–1	5	COIN win
Mozambique (RENAMO)	1976–1995	8	–3	5	COIN win
Turkey (PKK)	1984–1999	8	–2	6	COIN win
Indonesia (Aceh)	1976–2005	8	–2	6	COIN win
Algeria (GIA)	1992–2004	6	0	6	COIN win
Baluchistan	1973–1978	9	–2	7	COIN win
Uganda (ADF)	1986–2000	7	0	7	COIN win
Northern Ireland	1969–1999	9	–1	8	COIN win
Jordan	1970–1971	9	0	9	COIN win
Indonesia (Darul Islam)	1958–1962	10	0	10	COIN win
Angola (UNITA)	1975–2002	12	–2	10	COIN win
Greece	1945–1949	12	–2	10	COIN win
Uruguay	1963–1972	10	0	10	COIN win
Malaya	1948–1955	13	–2	11	COIN win
El Salvador	1979–1992	12	–1	11	COIN win
Oman (Dhofar Rebellion)	1965–1975	13	–1	12	COIN win
Peru	1980–1992	14	–2	12	COIN win
Sierra Leone	1991–2002	14	–1	13	COIN win
Senegal	1982–2002	13	0	13	COIN win
Philippines (MNLF)	1971–1996	14	–1	13	COIN win
Philippines (Huk Rebellion)	1946–1956	15	0	15	COIN win

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